PZ
7
.N51
C

FT MEADE
GenColl

CHRISTIAN BECK'S GRANDSON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
Karl GUSTAV NIERITZ.

BY
MARY E. IRELAND.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT
AUG 20 1895
CITY OF WASHINGTON

H2523 aug 1

Richmond, Va.:
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.
1894.

PZ
.N57e

COPYRIGHTED
BY
JAS. K. HAZEN, *Secretary of Publication.*
1894.

12-34606

PRINTED BY
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON,
RICHMOND, VA.

TO HER

Valued Friend,

MRS. EMMA B. SCHOLL,

OF BALTIMORE,

A FAITHFUL HELPER IN MISSIONARY AND OTHER CHURCH WORK,

THIS BEAUTIFUL STORY OF GERMAN HOME LIFE

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

Washington, D. C.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE EVENING, ... 7

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIAN BECK AS A MESSENGER, . . . 17

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO RAUNDORF CASTLE, ... 30

CHAPTER IV.

A DIVISION OF THE SPOILS, ... 36

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST AND SECOND WILLS, . . . 50

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN, ... 62

CHAPTER VII.

TOBIAS GOES ON A JOURNEY, ... 73

CHAPTER VIII.

TOBIAS SEES THE PASTOR, ... 86

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE FRIGHT, ... 95

CHAPTER X.

A GOOD RIDDANCE, ... 103

CHAPTER XI.

IN QUARTERS, ... 115

PAGE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO BATTLES, ... 126

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT IS TRUE HONOR? 136

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ATTACK BY FREEBOOTERS, ... 148

CHAPTER XV.

THE ALARM BELL, ... 160

CHAPTER XVI.

PRISONER OF WAR, ... 169

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTERS FOR THE BARON, ... 179

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISOBEDIENCE TO ORDERS, ... 187

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HIDDEN LETTER, ... 195

CHAPTER XX.

GREAT CHANGES, ... 203

CHAPTER XXI.

ALBERT SCHEINERT'S SPEECH, ... 213

CHAPTER XXII.

A HAPPY REUNION, ... 224

CHRISTIAN BECK'S GRANDSON.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE EVENING.

"TAKE care, Tobias, take care; I am afraid that you will fall and hurt yourself; go slower, Tobias."

"I would, dear grandfather; but see! I have reached the top step of the belfry tower, and never slipped once."

"It is exactly the way I would have gone up at his age," thought the aged schoolmaster, Christian Beck, "but now my old bones would not bear the strain, and my breath is too short for such exertion. There," continued he, as a vigorous sound of the bell rang out upon the evening air, "the boy has already reached the belfry room."

"Did you hear it, grandfather?" questioned Tobias, in glee, as the old man appeared.

"Oh, yes; if people would only speak in the clear tones of that bell they would not have occasion to say that I am deaf, while, in truth,

I am only somewhat *difficult of hearing.* And it is no wonder, when one considers that I was a cannoneer in the Thirty Years' War, and since that have taught school. It is surprising that I can hear so well."

"I pulled the bell-rope with a strong grasp; do you think that the villagers knew that it was only a boy who was ringing the bell?"

"You did very well indeed, and the bell is a good one; blessings upon the generous Frau von Raundorf, who gave it to the church. She did many good deeds in her life time, and no wonder the poor and needy grieve for her loss, as well as the poor old Baron."

"Let us stay up here a while, grandfather, and look out of the window," said Tobias; "I never get tired of looking down on the people. What were you saying about the Baron?"

"I was only about to wonder what joy he can take in his beautiful home, now that his wife is gone, and he is estranged from his only near relative, the young Lieutenant Carl von Raundorf," replied Herr Beck, as he seated himself upon the bench upon which Tobias knelt. The boy, in the meantime, was gazing from the window upon the one street of the village of Raundorf, upon the red roofs lighted by the beams of the setting sun, the fruit trees in bloom, the smoke curling from chimneys;

he heard the rumbling of vehicles and the sound of cheery voices. He could see Leise driving home her flock of geese, and Casper, the herdsman, bringing his sheep and goats to their stalls for the night. Boys were playing ball upon the green, and matrons were knitting by their open doors.

"Why is the bell rung at this hour in the evening, grandfather?" inquired Tobias, the thought coming to him for the first time.

"I am glad that you asked me, for I have strangely neglected to tell you. It is an offering of gratitude for deliverance from the wicked Turks. Twice they have invaded our country, and robbed and murdered the citizens; but now, thanks be to God, we are at peace with them, and mothers can sleep at ease beside their little ones. For this great blessing we give thanks at this hour, calling it to remembrance by the tolling of the bell. But there goes our gracious Herr Baron, looking dark of countenance this beautiful evening. He would not look so were he at peace with his nearest of kin and with his own conscience. Yes, yes, a good conscience is necessary to happiness; no one is at peace with himself and with the world who does not do right."

"What has he done, grandfather, that is not right?"

"He has discarded his own nephew, his only brother's son, whom he took upon the death of the parents and loved as his own. But young Lieutenant Carl married against his wishes, and was driven from the castle and told never to return."

"Why did the Baron dislike Herr Carl's wife?"

"The Baron is a very proud man, and the young wife is a bürgher's daughter, and poor, while he had selected for him a wealthy lady and one of high position. In his anger he has willed all his beautiful estate to Herr von Seerhausen, a nephew of his late wife, and Baron Carl gets nothing."

"But, grandfather, if he is sad over these things, why doesn't he change his will while he can? He could send for Herr Carl and his wife and children, if he wished; don't you think that they would come?"

"Gladly, gladly; they are both sincere Christians, and forgive as they hope to be forgiven. Herr Carl loves his uncle as he would a father, and well he may, for the old baron treated him as tenderly as any parent could treat a son. He gave him a good education, and did his duty by him in every way. I well remember his tears of joy when young Carl, having given his heart to the Saviour, was received into the

church, and partook of the holy communion for the first time. The good Frau Baroness had led him into the path which brings peace; now she rests from her labors."

"But, grandfather, the Herr Baron cannot be a Christian, or he would forgive."

"He has allowed his pride to master him. He longs for the companionship of Baron Carl, is lonely in his great house, but tries to keep the world from knowing it."

"We can see the castle plainly from this church tower, grandfather; don't you think it is a pretty place?"

"Beautiful, beautiful; a very valuable property. The whole country is lovely, especially at this hour. The setting sun has turned all the roofs to gold, and the windows to sparkling diamonds, and the mountains and valleys are bathed in golden mist. Sing your evening hymn, Tobias; there can be no more fitting time and place than this."

The boy complied, his clear voice ringing in an anthem of praise, while the old schoolmaster joined in the melody, his eyes moist with tears.

"It seems to bring me very near my heavenly home," said he, when the hymn was concluded. "Many a time your mother and grandmother joined me in singing it; now they rest in the church-yard below."

They remained until the sun descended from view, then they left the tower, and when they reached the door of their cottage they were joyfully welcomed by their two geese, which had been driven home by Leise, the girl who had charge of all the geese of Raundorf. It did not take long for the bright eyes of Tobias to see that the neck of one of them was bleeding.

"Grandfather," said he, "some one has hurt Fairy; see, there is blood on her snow-white feathers."

"It looks as if cut with a riding-whip," said the old schoolmaster, examining it; "I wonder who could have been so cruel?"

"It must have been done after Leise left them at our door, or she would have waited to tell us of it," commented Tobias.

"Strange that, among so many geese, one of our two should be the only sufferer. I wish that the poor creature could talk, and tell us who hurt her, and why. Take her to the stall, Tobias, and set a pan of water near her; she will bathe in it, and nothing is better for a hurt than water. Then I will wash the salt from a piece of butter, which will make an excellent ointment, and we will rub it on the wound."

Tobias followed these instructions, then returned to the cottage, and he and his grand-

father sat down to their supper of sweet brown bread, butter, roast apples, cheese, and new milk, heartily enjoyed by both after the fatigues of the day.

Tobias removed the remains of the meal, and put the room in order; then his grandfather took down the well-worn Bible, and read aloud a chapter, explaining it, as he read, to the listener.

"'My peace I leave with you,'" concluded he, closing the book; "truly there could be no more beautiful benediction, and no one can appreciate it more than those who have been soldiers for many years of their life. Ah! some of us have passed through terrible times, the ground stained with the blood of human beings, and the cries and groans of the wounded; and all this because men wanted territory which of right belonged to others. At this time we are at peace with all nations, and for this we must rejoice. Then, there is another peace, that of the home; and there is upon earth no more beautiful sight than that of a happy home circle. Then, there is another peace, that of the conscience, and in that our Herr Baron fails; he is angry with the whole world because he is unhappy, and he is unhappy because he cannot get his own consent to do the right. I hope that God will open his eyes to his folly

and weakness while there is time to rectify his error."

"Grandfather, if he is angry with the world and with everything in it, maybe he hurt our goose."

"We must not suspect anybody, my boy. And now it is your bedtime; good-night, and sleep well, not forgetting to say your evening prayer."

Tobias was soon in a sweet sleep, while Christian Beck sat for more than an hour by himself, enjoying the calm evening; then he retired, but he could not sleep.

"The poor goose!" thought he; "I think it the worst of cruelties to hurt defenceless creatures. I wish that I had gone to the stall before coming to bed; I will go now, and see if the goose is yet bleeding."

He arose, dressed, and lighting a lantern went to his little stable, the joyful cackling of the geese proving him to be a welcome visitor.

He had scarcely time to notice that Fairy seemed to be comfortable, when his attention was attracted to a knocking at his cottage door, and he hurried to see who it could be at that unusual hour.

"Can it be Pastor Seebach, who needs my services in some way?" thought he.

He was not long in doubt. Before the door stood a tall, straight, handsome young man.

"Good evening, dear Beck," said he, in a subdued voice.

"Who are you?" inquired the old schoolmaster, in surprise.

"Don't you know Lieutenant Carl?"

"Is it possible!" replied the old schoolmaster, joyously, as he drew the leather string which raised the wooden latch. "Come right in, Herr Carl, how glad, how very glad I am to see you!"

"And I am glad to accept the invitation, for I know it is sincere, and your cottage is a haven of refuge to me, for I came at night, not wishing to be seen and recognized by the villagers."

"But, dear Herr Baron, they would rejoice to see you. Raundorf does not seem the same since you left it, much less your old home. The Baron misses you terribly. But your wife and little ones, where are they?"

"Waiting close by until I could see you and know if you could accommodate us."

"Certainly I can, why should you doubt it?" questioned the old schoolmaster; "go, dear Herr Carl, and bring them; take the lantern to light their way."

"No, dear Beck, my wife is brave and

sure-footed; no fear of her falling, and the light might attract the attention of some passer-by."

He hurried away, and in a few minutes returned with his little family.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIAN BECK AS A MESSENGER.

LIEUTENANT CARL led his little boy by the hand and upon his arm carried the sleeping Lila, while the mother bore the packages containing necessities for a stay of even one night, and tears of joy were in her gentle eyes, now that they were assured of a place of repose for their sleepy little ones.

"Take us to the school-room, dear friend," said Carl, "our voices cannot be heard from there."

"Yes, you are shut out from sight and sound of the street there," replied the old schoolmaster, "follow me," and taking up the lantern he led the way to a plain little room where Carl had conned his lessons in happy childhood.

"You are somewhat changed in the years since you left us, dear Herr Baron," commented the old man, holding the light where it fell upon his visitor's face. "You are graver and more manly-looking, have not so much color, and are thinner; but your earnest, truthful eyes are the same, and I know that you are the

upright, honorable, generous man that you were when you left Raundorf."

"Thank you! It is good to be appreciated by those who have known us all our lives. You are sure we will not inconvenience you too much if we remain a few days with you?"

"Not in the least; my cottage is at your entire service, and is honored by having such guests. I will do all I can to make you comfortable, but, of course, it cannot be like home to you."

"When love and peace and contentment are the foundations of a home, happiness cannot be wanting, even to the stranger within its gates," replied the young man, feelingly, "and you cannot know the comfort it is to me to find myself here. We will give you as little trouble as possible, and only hope that we can keep our coming a secret until we have seen my uncle, or at least done all in our power to see him."

"I am quite sure we can manage to keep it from his knowledge, for to-morrow, being Saturday, there will be no school, and I have but few callers at any time. The Baron is seldom absent from the castle, and converses with no more people than he can help, so will not be apt to hear of your arrival in time to give orders to deny your admittance to his presence."

"We can only hope for the best," replied Carl, cheered in spite of his misgivings founded upon the knowledge of his uncle's unforgiving disposition."

"You must all need some refreshment, you have traveled so far and did not wish to stop in the village, excuse me one moment and I will get you something to eat."

"No," replied husband and wife, in a breath, "we really need nothing."

But this did not satisfy the hospitable nature of Herr Beck; he set before them the simple viands of which he and Tobias had partaken hours before, and was glad to see that they were enjoyed.

"Now, dear friend," said Carl, rising from the table, "if you would give us what you can spare to make cots in the school-room for the little ones, we will keep you no longer from your rest. Just a quilt or blanket to spread upon two benches will be all we need, for you know that I am a soldier, and can put up with much greater hardships than the want of a comfortable bed, and my wife is one who makes the best of everything."

"I can do better for you than that, dear Herr Baron; if you will arrange the benches as you wish, I will bring three comfortable beds, and plenty of coverings."

The children, sleepy as they were, took keen interest in these novel proceedings, and while the father made two couches for them the mother prepared them for sleep, and free from care as the birds upon the boughs outside the school-room windows, they slept peacefully until late the next morning, and the parents upon a couch equally as comfortable, thanked God for the great kindness shown them, and, weary after their long day's anxiety, also slept, if not so profoundly as the little ones, yet much better than they had hoped.

Christian Beck arose quite early and went to his stall, his thoughts intent upon the day's dinner.

"I am sorry to kill Fairy," thought he, "but God gave us these creatures for food, and I have nothing else, and as she has been hurt it is better to kill her than the other. Here, Tobias," said he, as the boy appeared, and bent his steps toward the stream which flowed near the cottage, "come as soon as you have finished washing, I have an errand for you."

The morning ablutions were quickly performed, his hair was brushed and then Tobias hastened to his grandfather.

"I wish you to take this goose to neighbor Metzger, and ask her to kill it, dress it, and roast it for our dinner."

"Oh! grandfather, do you mean Fairy? Is she so badly hurt that you think she may die is your reason for killing her?"

"No, indeed, she is not much hurt, but we must kill one of them, for we have visitors."

"Visitors! Where are they?" questioned Tobias, full of boyish glee at the prospect of a change in his quiet life.

"There in the school-room, a gentleman, a lady, and two dear children, a boy named Otto, and a girl two years younger, named Lila."

Tobias was off like a deer, to see for himself, and standing by the apple tree in the garden he looked at the school-room window hoping to catch a glimpse of the visitors. He was not to be disappointed, for at that moment Lieutenant Carl came to the casement and looked out, and Tobias, much abashed, ran away.

"Why did you run?" laughed his grandfather, as the boy, with a very red face, stood before him.

"A handsome gentleman with a black mustache came and looked out, and a beautiful lady came and stood beside him. They smiled when they saw me, and I could not stay a minute longer."

"Well, your curiosity is satisfied, now you can go to Frau Metzger's with the goose; tell her I will pay her her own price for preparing

it for our dinner; and Tobias, don't say a word in regard to our guests. Stop in the village and get some fresh semmels, then hurry back and help me with the breakfast."

Tobias departed, and in good time returned with the warm semmels from the bakery, and the report that the goose would be ready exactly at noon.

"Do you arrange four plates and cups, saucers, knives and forks upon a waiter, Tobias, and put the semmels and a pitcher of fresh water upon it, while I make the coffee," said Herr Beck.

Tobias did as requested, deftly and neatly, and by the time the coffee was ready had tied a clean white apron about him, in readiness to carry the waiter to the school-room, where he found the young officer busily writing, his wife standing near.

"Thank you, my dear boy, that coffee-pot and the blue cups and saucers remind me of the times when as a boy I slipped off from the castle to take breakfast with the schoolmaster. I thought there could be no better coffee than that made by your grandmother; and the fragrance of this brings it vividly to recollection."

Tobias smiled, well-pleased, then returned to the little kitchen where his grandfather

awaited him, and together they partook of their simple morning meal, and when they thought the Baron and his family had finished breakfast Tobias went to remove the waiter, and then his grandfather paid his morning greetings to his guests.

"Good morning, dear Herr Beck!" said the Lieutenant, "we have all had a comfortable rest under your roof. I have written a letter to my uncle, in case he is not at home, or will not receive me. I have written many letters to him asking his pardon for having offended him, but have never received a word of reply. If he would but see my Amelia and the little ones I am sure he would forgive me for disappointing him."

"I am sure he would were it not for his terrible pride; that crowds out all tender feeling with one like him. But word of mouth may be of more avail than writing."

"We have taught our children to commit to memory a few words of greeting to their great-uncle, and trained them to call him grandfather. My dear Amalie, let the children repeat their greeting to Herr Beck."

"Dear Otto," questioned the mother, gently, "what will you say to grandpa when you see him?"

"Will sister say it, too?" inquired he.

"Yes, Lila will say just what you say," smiled the mother.

The children stepped into the middle of the school-room floor, folded their arms, and cast up their pretty blue eyes.

"Dear grandpa," said Otto.

"Dea' g'an'pa," echoed little Lila, earnestly.

"Please forgive our papa and mamma—"

"Fordive our papa and mamma—"

"For they love you—"

"For 'ey 'ove 'ou."

"Forgive and forget, dear grandpa," concluded Otto.

"Fordive an' fordet, dea' g'an'pa," echoed Lila.

The children's petition was ended, and the schoolmaster's eyes were full of tears.

"Only a heart of stone could refuse to grant the request of these dear little ones," he said.

"I wish you would add one more kindness to that already done, dear friend," said Carl, "and that is, to take my letter to the castle, and to wait until my uncle reads it. You will then have opportunity to judge what temper he is in, and whether it will be better for us to visit him to-day, or to put it off until a better time."

"Yes, I will take the letter, and hope that I will see him. My greatest anxiety is that he

will speak so fast and loud that I cannot hear him. If people would only speak in a moderate tone, it would be better for me and more pleasant to them."

"I hope that my uncle will receive you kindly, for your own sake as well as mine; it would grieve me to have you slighted."

"You came at a good time, Herr Carl, for to-morrow the pastor preaches on forgiveness, and the Baron is never absent from his seat in church. And now I will set out for the castle."

Baron Carl watched him from the window, and hoped earnestly that the mission might be successful.

"Pray God that he may listen to me, and not speak too loud," thought the messenger, as he rang the bell and heard the footsteps of the servant approaching.

"Please tell the gracious Herr Baron that Schoolmaster Beck has a message for him," said he, the moment the door was opened.

"He is dressing to go out, but you can wait here in the ante-room and I will tell him," was the reply.

Glad of an opportunity to compose himself before what he dreaded would be a stormy interview, Herr Beck sank into a chair and waited. In a few minutes the servant returned, and conducted him to the Baron.

"What do you wish of me?" questioned the Baron, in a cold tone. "Nothing that is agreeable, I imagine."

"I hope never to be the bearer of any but agreeable news," replied the schoolmaster, gently, "and what I bring now should be gratefully welcome."

"Well, out with it; don't keep me waiting. Don't you see that I am going out?"

"The very last thing that I wish to do is to anger you, for I long to be a messenger of peace," and he put Carl's letter into the hand of the Baron, who read it through, then tore it in pieces and trampled it under foot, while Herr Beck continued:

"Your nephew loves you as though you were indeed his father; he longs for forgiveness; and, for the sake of your dead brother, whose only child he was, forgive him, and give him your love."

"And my property," commented the Baron, sarcastically.

"Oh! do not judge him so harshly," pleaded Christian Beck; "surely you have not known him from childhood to so little purpose. The sin of covetousness can never be laid at his door, and he only values money for the good that he can do for others."

"I warned him what the penalty would be

if he married against my wishes; he chose to rebel; let him abide by the consequences. Not a dollar of my money shall be his."

"But he does not think of money; he only craves forgiveness and the love that you once had for him. Forgive as you hope to be forgiven."

"He disappointed my cherished hopes; he had no regard for my wishes, although I have been a father to him."

"Are we not all the children of our heavenly Father? Why, then, should we hold enmity against our brethren?"

"Let him remain in the obscurity in which he has placed himself; he has married a bürger's daughter; let him remain with that class."

"But if you could see his lovely wife and children your heart would relent toward them; she is a lady, good as she is fair."

"It is the old story of homespun and velvet; one of her class is not fitted by nature and education to occupy the station that I intended for my nephew; I shall never recognize her as my niece."

"I have seen her, and know that she is one whom you may well be proud of; and you would agree with me would you but allow them to visit you."

"Would it not be quite as well for you not

to meddle with matters which in no way concern you?" questioned Baron von Raundorf, angrily.

"I will go, Herr Baron," said Christian Beck, moving toward the door; "but if you would write one line of comfort to the poor boy, whose only fault has been in marrying a noble Christian lady, your sleep will be sweeter this night."

"Leave the castle this instant, if you do not wish me to ring for the servant to put you out."

The old schoolmaster saw that it would be of no use to speak another word, so he returned to his cottage without the cheery message that he had hoped to bring. He knew it would be a disappointment to Carl, but did not look for the utter despondency which took possession of him.

"'Rome was not built in a day,' dear Herr Lieutenant," said he, soothingly, "and you must not expect your uncle to be reconciled so easily. To-morrow is the day of repose and reflection for all who choose to make it so; let us hope that your uncle will think over your letter and what I told him. The sermon will, I am sure, reach his heart; and I am organist, and have the selection of the hymns upon the subject, and the words are very touching; they cannot fail of effect."

Lieutenant Carl derived some comfort from these words, and thanked his old friend for the kind interest that he had shown; and at that moment Tobias returning with the goose beautifully roasted, and having made ready the table before he left, they all sat down to dinner.

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO RAUNDORF CASTLE.

MONDAY morning came, and with many misgivings Carl and his wife set out for the castle, taking the children, who were delighted at the prospect of a walk after their confinement in the cottage for two days.

Had the parents' hearts been free from care, they would have enjoyed keenly the pleasures of a roam through the fragrant forest that beautiful day, but they were filled with anxiety; and the song of birds, the gurgling of the stream, and wild flowers springing along their path were almost unheeded.

At length they reached the main entrance to the castle, and passed through the gate; the deep baying of the hounds gave warning to Rosamond, Hanna and Bertha, who came from the stalls where they were feeding calves and lambs, and seeing it was Baron Carl their eyes grew moist with pleasure.

"It is Herr Lieutenant Carl, welcome, welcome!" cried they, joyfully.

"How are you all?" questioned he, glad as a boy to see them again.

"All well; but the castle is a dull place since you left it," replied Bertha.

By this time the coachman, gardener, and overseer had heard of the arrivals, and would have hurried to greet Baron Carl had not the presence of the lady restrained them; only the steward remained out of sight, he had no affection for the young Lieutenant, who with his little family now ascended the broad steps of the castle and waited while one of the servants went to announce their arrival. The young wife was nervous with apprehension and wishing the interview over, when the door opened and the old Baron entered.

"To what am I indebted for this visit?" said he, in a harsh voice.

"Dear uncle," said Carl, in trembling tones, "do not turn from us. This is my wife; these my little ones; we ask your forgiveness and long to be reconciled to you."

The Baron looked at the young wife with a haughty frown upon his countenance, then turned to his nephew.

"You expect this of me, you who have so bitterly disappointed me, to whom I have been as a father, and intended to give all my possessions?"

"But, uncle, if you were but acquainted with my wife you would appreciate the goodness

which won my affection. She longs to give you the respect and attention due you from the wife of your nephew."

"She did not know her place when she dared to marry one of your rank."

"My Amalie is the beloved daughter of an honored teacher. She does not, it is true, belong to the so-called nobility, but she is noble by nature, and has a sweet, gentle disposition. We are very happy together."

"If you are so happy in each other's society and that of your children, I wonder you crave my friendship," commented the Baron, ironically.

"It distresses me that my second father is displeased with me, and my wife shares in the feeling, blaming herself as the cause of my estrangement from you."

"And back of all that is the fear of losing what the 'dear uncle' has to bequeath when he is done with earth."

"You do us great injustice," said Carl, deeply wounded, "it is the loss of the love and kindness you once gave me that we mourn. We have no right nor wish to influence you in regard to your estate, give us your love and friendship, it is all we ask."

Prompted quietly by the mother, the little ones stepped toward the Baron to make the speech which had been taught them.

"Dear grandpa," said Otto.

"Dee g'anpa," echoed Lila.

"Forgive papa and mother."

"Hush this instant!" cried the old Baron, stamping his foot in anger, "I am sick and tired of all this acting; you need not hope to blind me with your studied speeches. I see through your deceitful plans, and will pay no attention to them. You and your wife can remain in the station in which you have placed yourself."

"Say no more," cried Carl, "do not tempt me to utter anything which I should regret."

"No, Carl," said his wife, gently, "let us go; for our children's sake it is better that no more be said. You have made the effort to make peace with your uncle, that it has failed is no fault of yours."

Without further words Carl took his little daughter in his arms, and, followed by Amalie and Otto, left the castle.

Schoolmaster Beck was waiting for their return, and one glance at Carl's face told him that the visit had not been a success. He read it in the downcast looks of the husband and the tears in the eyes of the wife.

It was noon, and his scholars had dispersed to the forest to play, and he could hear all undisturbed.

"It is surprising," said he, in a disappointed

tone, "I would never have believed that his heart was so hard that it would not be touched at the sight of these dear children. And he intends leaving his beautiful castle and all he possesses to Herr von Seerhausen, a miserly, godless man, with a dissipated son. But do not be discouraged, my dear young friends, there is a God of justice over all, and I believe your uncle will be sorry for this morning's work. But while I am talking, the little ones are nearly famished; sit down and rest while Tobias and I set up the dinner."

"We are deeply grateful to you for all your kindness to us, and will not trespass upon you much longer. Our carriage will wait in the forest for us, and about four o'clock we will set out for home no happier, save for your goodness, than when we came."

The balance of the roast goose, with brown bread, butter, roast apples, and coffee formed their dinner, then the children took their afternoon sleep, the scholars returned to their lessons, and the schoolmaster to his duties, and the husband and wife walked to the forest to wait for the carriage.

"Dear Amalie," said the Lieutenant, "the hospitality we have received from Herr Beck calls to mind the story of the rich man who had a large herd of sheep but would not prepare

one for the refreshment of a traveler, but his poor neighbor had but one and freely offered it. We have experienced it in the difference between the treatment of our uncle and the poor schoolmaster. I hope the time will come when I can return his kindness in the only way he would accept recompense."

After a time they saw the carriage approaching, so returned to the cottage, and school being over, the schoolmaster and Tobias bade goodbye to them and the little ones, and saw them drive away.

CHAPTER IV.

A DIVISION OF THE SPOILS.

THE next day Albert Scheinert, the son of the steward at the castle, was absent from his place in Herr Beck's school-room, and it was supposed that, as was customary with him, he was playing truant.

"Go, Tobias," said the old schoolmaster, "and see if he is in the forest gathering hazelnuts; the forest is a great temptation to idle boys."

Tobias obeyed, and was not long in finding the truant. "Come, Albert," said he, "grandfather says to come into school this minute."

"I will come when I feel like it, and not a moment before, and you may tell him so," replied the boy, defiantly.

"If you don't come you will get a hazelnut switch upon your back, instead of hazelnuts in your pocket."

"Let your grandfather whip me if he dares, and I will tell my father, and he will tell the Baron, and you will see how he stands then."

"My grandfather is afraid of no man," said

Tobias, proudly, "he is a soldier, and served in the Seven Years' War."

"But he is old and deaf, and it would be no trouble for my father to persuade the Baron that he is too old to teach school."

"It is no fault that he is old," replied Tobias, indignantly, "and he says that it is God's will that he is deaf, and he therefore never complains, and bears it patiently."

"Because he has to," sneered Albert, "but his being deaf does not make him any better for school-teaching."

"But it should keep people like you from finding fault with him, and laughing at him. I did not tell him that you were making fun of him behind his back, putting your hand back of your ear as he does to enable him to hear."

"I don't care if you do tell him; nobody learns anything from him; it would only take a word from my father to get the Herr Baron to give the school to my cousin, who is much younger, and is not deaf."

"Certainly he would not be so cruel," said Tobias, turning pale with apprehension.

The sound of carriage wheels rolling over the bridge, which crossed the stream near them, prevented reply, and the boys looked with curiosity upon the occupants, a gentleman and his driver.

"It is the Herr Advocate Riemer, from Raundorf," said Albert, "the Baron sent for him to write his will. He told father he was going to give his castle and all his property to Herr von Seerhausen, the nephew of the Baroness, and father is to be one of the witnesses of the will."

"Oh! I think that is too bad," said Tobias, "grandfather says that the Frau Baroness was just, and were she living would not think it right that Lieutenant Carl should not have it."

"But she is not living, and the castle is the Baron's and he can leave it to whom he pleases. And my father is glad of it, he don't like Baron Carl, who made him give an account of every penny when he was here and had charge of the estate, and the overseer don't like him either."

"You appear to know all about it," remarked Tobias, drily, "does your father tell you all his business?"

"Oh! I know far more than I have told you; yes, indeed, it is not much that I don't know about it, and about other things, too."

"Do you know anything of the great boulders which lie under the beech trees?"

"What is there to know about them? Rocks are rocks, and that is all that can be said about them."

"Grandfather has told me a great deal about them, and will tell it all to you and the others sometime, but, indeed, we must go, Albert."

They went to the school-room, where the delinquent received a merited rebuke from Herr Beck, which he listened to sullenly, then took his place in the class, and at noon went home to his dinner.

All through the afternoon the words of Albert came into the mind of Tobias, and while he and his grandfather were eating their supper he was strongly tempted to tell him, but he had been trained to forbear from casting shadows when it was possible to avoid it, so refrained, yet could not help a feeling of anxiety when a messenger came from the castle to summon Herr Beck.

"I am afraid the Baron has sent for him to tell him that he is intending to put a younger man in his place," thought the boy, as he saw his grandfather take his cane and depart; "oh, it would break his heart, for he loves his scholars, and there is really nothing else he can do."

The first glance which Tobias cast upon his grandfather's face proved that his fears were realized; it was very pale, and tears dimmed his kind eyes.

"Are you to leave the school, grandfather?" questioned he.

"Yes, I always knew that the Baron von Raundorf was sour-tempered, but did not believe he was so hard-hearted. His main reason for sending for me this evening was that I might be one of the witnesses to his will, which Advocate Riemer had just written and read aloud to us, giving the castle and all the rest of his property to Herr von Seerhausen."

"Who were the other witnesses, grandfather?"

"The steward, the overseer, and the gardener; and after we had signed our names, and Scheinert, the others and the advocate had left the room, the Baron told me that he no longer needed my services as school-teacher upon his estate, that I was too old and deaf to teach school."

"Albert told me all about it, grandfather; he said that you would have to herd geese, or be a night watchman in Raundorf."

"And you did not prepare me for it, Tobias," commented the old man.

"No, grandfather, I thought that it would be better for you not to know it; and, besides, I did not know but that Albert had only told me because he was angry that you sent for him, and that there was no truth in it."

"But you see that it was true; and I can scarcely realize that I am about to lose the position I have held for so many years; but

God's will be done; he knows what is best for me, and will not let us suffer for bread."

Some days elapsed, and one morning the Baron von Raundorf mounted a favorite horse to ride through his beech forest. The deep stillness was oppressive, for the Baron was far from happy, and his thoughts were not upon the beauty which surrounded him. Wild flowers bloomed at his feet unnoticed, and the tinkling of the brook near at hand was unheeded.

"It is a dismal place," thought he; "I wish that I had taken my steward's advice, and had it thinned out; the timber would have brought me a large sum of money; no doubt Seerhausen will hew and hack when I am done with it and he comes into possession."

His meditations were interrupted by the rolling of wheels over the bridge. His horse, young and spirited, frisked and reared at the sound, and then shied suddenly, throwing the Baron to the ground. To a younger man the accident might have proved serious, but to one numbering nearly fourscore it proved fatal; and when his groom dismounted and came to his assistance he found the Baron unconscious.

There was great excitement in the village of Raundorf when the groom reached there and told the story; and while four strong men bore

the body upon a litter to the castle, another went for the physician, who was in attendance at a distant farmhouse, with the hope that something might be done for the unfortunate man.

"Oh!" sighed Herr Beck to Tobias, "how uncertain is life! but an hour ago in the flush of health, and now, it may be, a senseless corpse! May God be more merciful to him than he was to poor Lieutenant Carl, and forgive him his trespasses if it be that he has gone to his account! But we will hope that he can be restored to life and reason."

But very few believed that he would ever speak again, and for several hours it was scarcely possible to decide; but at length he regained consciousness. In the meantime Scheinert had hurried off to acquaint Herr von Seerhausen with the accident, that he might be ready to take possession at any moment.

"I wish to see my nephew, Carl von Raundorf," were the Baron's first words; "bring him to me as quickly as possible."

The good pastor, who was seated beside the Baron, was filled with joy on hearing this, and immediately dispatched a messenger for Lieutenant Carl; then he returned to the sick-room.

"Oh, dear friend, I have done so wrong in regard to the poor boy, and I fear that I will

not live to see him and to ask his forgiveness for my cruel treatment. I have, in my foolish anger, left all my property to Seerhausen, who has not the least right to it, and now it is too late to remedy it; I shall not live until morning."

"No, it is never too late to do good so long as life lasts!" exclaimed the pastor, eagerly. "Send for Riemer, and make your wishes known to him. I am obliged to return to the village now; if you will give me leave, I will immediately send a messenger to Berlin for him."

"Do so, dear friend, and pray God that it may not be too late."

In the meantime the news had spread that the Baron had sent for Lieutenant Carl, and none rejoiced more than the old schoolmaster.

"Our heavenly Father doeth all things well, Tobias," said he; "nothing is hidden from his sight, and he can bring good out of evil. We can only pray that Baron Carl may reach there in time to receive his uncle's blessing."

Weary with the excitement of the day, Schoolmaster Beck and Tobias retired early, and the next morning, when Herr Beck was opening the shutters, a servant from the castle halted, on his way to the village, to say that the Baron had sent for the Herr Advocate,

who had come, and, it was whispered among the servants, had made another will, and that it was in favor of Lieutenant Carl; and that the advocate was to remain there until the Baron gave him leave to go.

"God has mercifully prolonged his life until justice should be done," said Herr Beck to Tobias, as the servant kept on his way; "now, if, in his mercy, he should keep him alive until Baron Carl can reach there, we would have nothing more to ask; but it is fully twenty miles to his home, and the journey must be made by carriage or on horseback. Well, well, God will care for his own."

Scarcely had the two finished their breakfast of coffee and dry semmels, when there came a message for Herr Beck to go to the castle, and to bring Pastor Seeback with him. No time was lost, and in a very short time the two were standing at the bedside of the dying man, a repentant sinner needing God's mercy.

"I cannot hope for forgiveness unless I forgive," said the Baron, feebly; "if I do not live to see Carl, tell him that I bitterly repent of all my mistakes and misdoings, and amongst them that of my cruelty in not listening to his pleadings. I humbly pray that God will forgive me as I have forgiven Carl and all who, I thought, had offended me."

At that moment the door opened and Lieutenant Carl quickly entered, sank upon his knees by the bedside and pressed his lips upon the hand of his uncle.

The face of the old Baron lighted with joy, and his lips moved as if in words of blessing, but he was past the power of speech.

"My father, my more than father, must you leave us?" said Carl, with tears of sincere grief.

The eyes of the dying man looked heavenward, as though he, too, had asked forgiveness, and his prayer had been granted, then with a sigh of content he passed from earth.

The moment the breath left the body, the advocate hurried from the room, and made his way to the dwelling of the steward.

"The king is dead, long live the king! Scheinert, you have another master," said he.

"Yes, and sorry am I for it. It is a disastrous thing for me that the Baron made another will last night."

"Why, man, I thought you would be rejoiced," exclaimed Riemer, in surprise.

"No, I never liked Baron Carl, and was well pleased that von Seerhausen was chosen heir."

"But you are not acquainted with von Seerhausen, and don't know what kind of employer he would make; you do know Lieutenant Carl."

"Yes, too well, his uncle let him manage the

funds of the estate, and he called me to account for every bushel of grain sold off the place, and every animal, if but a chicken. The overseer of the farm people don't like him either, and the Lieutenant is no friend to you."

"No friend to me! What can he have against me?"

"I don't know, but I am sure of this, that you would not have been here to write the will had Lieutenant Carl been consulted; and you will find that you who have always been the old Baron's advocate, and the gardener, the overseer and myself who witnessed it, will be discharged as soon as Lieutenant Carl takes possession."

"You astonish me!" said the lawyer, "I thought you would be fixtures here if he took possession, and might be displaced if von Seerhausen was owner, agreeably to the first will."

"Herr Advocate," said the steward, lowering his voice, "why could not this last will be kept secret, and let von Seerhausen become owner as was first intended?"

Riemer looked at him in mute surprise, too bewildered for the moment to speak.

"Could you not have the report spread that the old Baron, owing to his fall, was not in his right mind and was not fit to make a will when the last one was made?"

"But the doctor will testify, if it comes to trial, that he was perfectly competent."

"Well, then, can't you take the matter in your own hands, and say that you destroyed the paper by mistake, or at the request of the old Baron, who regretted that he had made it?"

"But the witnesses know the contents of the last will, and that would stand in law."

"No, they do not know; the old Baron did not tell them as he did in case of the first will, neither did he tell you to read it aloud."

"That alters the case somewhat, but for what purpose then do they think the Baron sent for me in such haste and at night?"

"I told them that he wished to add a codicil to his will; several little bequests which he had neglected to mention."

"What advantage would it be to let the first will stand, except to Herr von Seerhausen?"

"It would keep Lieutenant Carl from the ownership of the estate, and thus make our places here secure."

"But Herr von Seerhausen might make a change also; no doubt he will have his own people to take your places here."

"Not if he knows the service we have done him; he will be glad to keep it for his own security. I went to see him the very hour the

Baron was thrown from his horse, told him of the will in his favor, and asked him to keep me in his service."

"What kind of a man is this von Seerhausen?" questioned the lawyer.

"I don't know him very well, but I know he is very jealous of Baron Carl, and would pay us well to destroy the second will."

Much more conversation followed, and then the lawyer promised to aid in the deception. The gardener and overseer were called, and all bound themselves by a solemn promise to keep the secret of the second will.

"Now, you all understand," said the advocate, "we are only to keep quiet in regard to the second will, and Herr von Seerhausen will be heir to all that the old Baron possessed."

"But, first, we must see Herr von Seerhausen, and ask what he will give for our silence," suggested the overseer.

"No, let me advise here," said the advocate, "say nothing to him till he takes possession; then, rather than give it up, he will give what we demand; and, in the first place, we will demand the nine thousand dollars which, in the last will, the old Baron requested should be equally divided between the church, the school, the pastor, and Schoolmaster Beck.

This sum we will divide equally between you three witnesses and myself."

"I think it should be divided into six equal parts, of which the Herr Advocate should have two parts, and I two, because we planned the whole affair," said the steward.

"No, all come in equal, or I will have nothing to do with it," said the overseer, doggedly.

"Nor I," quoth the gardener, and so the conference ended with the unanimous agreement that all should have an equal share of the nine thousand dollars.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST AND SECOND WILL.

BARON von Raundorf was placed in the old church-yard of Raundorf, and Carl was the only mourner.

Herr von Seerhausen was there, and as soon as the funeral was over he returned immediately to the castle, while Carl remained talking to the friends and neighbors he had known from childhood, and who were dismayed beyond measure that he had been supplanted by a stranger.

"Dear Herr Carl," said Schoolmaster Beck, with tears in his eyes, "don't you intend taking measures to prove that the estate by right is yours? The whole village and country round believes that the Baron changed his mind, and sent for Advocate Riemer, who wrote another will which gave the property to you. He would not have sent for you in such haste, nor been so anxious to see you, if he had not intended leaving all to you."

"Don't be distressed about it, dear friend," said Carl, "God will see that justice is done; I am deeply grateful to him for allowing me to see my uncle, and obtaining his forgiveness and

blessing, and now I must return to my home; farewell good Beck and friends and neighbors, and do not forget me."

The new owner, Herr von Seerhausen, was a tall thin man, with a stern cast of countenance, and a hook nose and piercing eyes which gave him the appearance of a bird of prey. His son, Bruno, was a young man of twenty years, reserved and silent in manner, and very dissipated, being much of his time under the influence of beer. His father did not take any pleasure in his society, and he was not consulted in regard to the estate in any way. The father went alone over the fertile fields, the splendid forests, and viewed the choice stock of all kinds kept upon it. He visited the stables, the cow and sheep stalls, the poultry yards, the milk rooms; questioned the maids in regard to their duties and their hours of work, found fault with some of the rules of their former employer, and made it understood that they should not have the easy times that had reigned before his coming. The good and abundant food which had been upon their tables disappeared as time passed on, and only the plainest fare was substituted, the funds saved finding place in the owner's pocket instead of that of the steward.

All the people on the place grieved for the

good times when the old Baron was with them, who, though whimsical and ill-tempered at times, was generous and kind; but so far they had found no good side to Herr von Seerhausen.

In the meantime the steward, overseer and gardener were beginning to think that the Advocate Riemer was playing them false, and was reaping the reward without giving them their share, and had agreed that if he made no report to them within a given time they would break their promise and tell von Seerhausen that a will had been made in favor of Lieutenant Carl.

On his part, Riemer besought them to be patient. "Don't pluck the fruit until it is ripe," counseled he. "The more haughty and disagreeable the new owner is with you now, the more humbled will he be when he hears what you have to tell him."

At length the time came when he considered it good policy to let Herr von Seerhausen know where he stood; and for this purpose he drove one evening to the castle, and asked to see him.

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" inquired the new owner, as the advocate greeted him with a smile and a bow.

"I came," replied he, "to tell you something which will not, I fear, add to your happiness, and which you will, perhaps, censure me for

not telling you before; but it is very much against my feelings to bring disagreeable news to a friend, therefore I have withheld it as long as possible."

"Will you oblige me by coming to the point without so much twaddle?" questioned von Seerhausen, coldly.

"The last night that your predecessor, Baron von Raundorf, lived, he sent for me to write another will. I came, and wrote it. It gives all his property, with the exception of nine thousand dollars, to his nephew, Carl von Raundorf."

The face of Herr von Seerhausen turned very pale, and his gaze was fastened upon the advocate, as though he were unable to comprehend the words.

"Of course," continued Riemer, "there were three witnesses to the will, and it is all executed according to law."

"And there is another and later will?" commented von Seerhausen, mechanically, as if unconscious that he was speaking.

"Yes, but it cannot be found. I was quite sure that I took it home that night and placed it with the former will, but I cannot find it, so I must have lost it on my way. I have kept silence, hoping that the finder might restore it. Of course, I would rather that it were destroy-

ed, for no doubt the Baron wished you to be his heir, and it was only the fear of death, and the weakness of his mind in consequence, that made him leave the property to Carl.

"Yes, I suppose so," acquiesced the unhappy man.

"Now," continued Riemer, "as several weeks have passed, and no one has come forward to say that the document is found, I have reason to feel more at ease; but the three witnesses to the last will are making bitter complaints, and have threatened that, if I do not find the will, they will inform the authorities of its existence, and also Lieutenant Carl."

"I really cannot hear any more this evening," said von Seerhausen, tremulously; "leave me now, Riemer, and call again in the morning; I must be alone to think it over."

"Very good, my dear sir; I will drive over in the morning"; and, nodding pleasantly, the lawyer withdrew.

Not one minute did the Herr von Seerhausen sleep that night, and in the morning he arose feverish and miserable, awaiting with restless anxiety the arrival of the lawyer.

He was prompt to the minute, and came in with the air of one who had the matter in his own hands, and, therefore, was not the least in awe of his host.

"I scarcely know whether to congratulate my good fortune or not," said he, briskly, "but the will is found. It was in the breast-pocket of the coat that I wore that night to the castle, and that I have not worn since. I have brought it to you for inspection."

Herr von Seerhausen trembled so much that he was forced to take a seat as he reached out his hand for the paper, and tried to read it; but the words danced before his eyes like motes in a sunbeam.

"Is it all according to law?" questioned he; "no flaw, no defect, which may leave it an open question whether he is heir or not?"

"Not the least," replied Riemer, "while the one that made you heir has one defect, one of the witnesses—old Beck, the schoolmaster—being as deaf as a post. If you don't believe that the will is correct, show it to any other lawyer; I will give you perfect freedom to do so."

"Oh, no; I am satisfied that you are telling me the truth."

"That paltry piece of paper," continued Riemer, "is the bar between you and a splendid estate. Were it not for that, you, and your son after you, would possess riches and high position."

"Why do you torture me in this way? Do

you not see that I cannot grasp the situation, nor know what course to take to secure the estate?"

Oh! if the tempted man had but listened to the pleadings of his own conscience, that besought him to give up the property to its rightful owner, how plain would have been his path, how happy would he have been in the knowledge that he had pleased God by putting far from him the evil one, who was tempting him!

"I would far rather see you in possession of this great estate than Lieutenant Carl," replied the evil one, speaking through the advocate, "for in your hands I am sure it would double in value. No doubt the old Baron thought of that when he bequeathed it to you."

"You are my evil genius!" cried von Seerhausen, almost beside himself with his great struggle with his conscience. "Why did you not tell me this weeks ago, before I grew attached to the place, and while I had power to resist the temptation?"

"I have already told you the reason," replied the attorney, triumphing in secret over his shrewdness.

"What do you advise me to do?"

"I don't know what your wishes are in regard to it," replied Riemer, with apparent indifference. "There are two courses open to

you, either give the castle and all the other possessions to the fortunate heir, and return to the obscurity from whence you came, or ——," here he hesitated and looked down to the floor.

"What were you about to say?" questioned von Seerhausen.

His adviser said nothing, but cast a significant glance at the paper in the hand of his companion.

"Who are the three witnesses and where do they live?" asked von Seerhausen.

"They are upon the estate, and are not favorable to Carl. They all appear to have elastic consciences, and can, I am sure, be bound to silence."

There was a long pause, and Riemer watched his companion narrowly.

"How much do you think the three witnesses would demand for their silence?" at length asked von Seerhausen.

"They told me that would rest entirely upon your treatment of them in their demand for pay as witnesses."

"How much do they ask for their service as witnesses?"

"Nine thousand dollars."

"Nine—thousand—dollars!" cried von Seerhausen, in a startled tone, "have you counseled the wretches to demand such a sum?"

"No, they set that price themselves."

"Why did they specify an odd number, why not eight or ten, for of course you share in it?"

"They agreed upon nine thousand because in the last will, which made Carl the heir, the old Baron left that sum to be equally divided between the church, the pastor, the school, and the schoolmaster. They agreed that if Lieutenant Carl could spare it out of the estate you could do the same."

"You say they agreed upon asking such a sum, but do you suppose they expect it?"

"I am quite sure of it; they are of the opinion that out of this vast estate nine thousand dollars would no more be missed than a drop of water out of a full bucket. You must understand that as the case stands you are the heir of several hundred thousand."

"What can such clods do with so much money?"

"They will find ways and times to use it, money will not come amiss to them any more than to you."

"Nine thousand dollars!" repeated von Seerhausen, gazing absently at the piece of paper which was causing all this trouble, would he allow it to stand between him and affluence? Ha! the open grate was glowing with a bright wood fire, why not throw it in, and thus destroy

all evidence that any but himself was heir to the vast estate." He cast a searching glance at the lawyer who had given the important document into his hands, and who was apparently indifferent to its fate.

"Nine thousand dollars!" repeated he, as if unable to realize the magnitude of the sum to be given away.

"If you were to give ten times that sum you would still have a greater fortune than you ever hoped to possess," remarked the lawyer.

"But if the three witnesses are to give you no share of this money, what do you demand for your services?"

"Only your confidence and patronage, dear Herr von Seerhausen," replied the lawyer, as though wounded by the question; "yes, dear friend, leave me entirely out of the question. I have never mentioned to anyone that there was a second will, because I had mislaid it, and knew my reputation as a careful business man would suffer were it known. All I demand is, that the nine thousand dollars for the three witnesses be placed in my hand before the will is given up to you."

"Nine thousand dollars is a great sum," said von Seerhausen.

"I will give you three days to consider the matter," replied Riemer; "in the meantime give me back the will."

He stretched out his hand for it, but for a moment it was withheld, the face of von Seerhausen betraying his inward conflict.

"You are right," said he, at length; "I will take three days to consider; here is the will, and I pray you do not let it go out of your hands."

"Oh! I understand all that; in three days I will call again, and hope you will have made up your mind."

He left the castle, and von Seerhausen walked for hours the long apartment, pondering the great change that had come over his prospects. He neither ate nor drank the whole day, but excited, angry and miserable, wished fervently that no such person as Carl von Raundorf was in existence. His conscience was now seared; and no wish to restore the property to its rightful owner crossed his mind. He had been tempted of Satan, and had not entreated to be delivered from evil to the One whose ear is ever open to the suppliant. His only thought now was to plan to avoid giving the money to the witnesses.

"Oh! if I had only had some hint of the real state of affairs when I first came into possession of the property," thought he, "I would have sold it, put the money in my pocket and fled to some foreign country. I would have

put the ocean between me and these villains, would have outwitted this thieving lawyer and his associates. He tries to make me believe that he expects no part of that nine thousand, but I have heard enough of him to know that he never lifts a finger for any one without being well paid for it."

Filled with inexpressible hate against the lawyer and all concerned, and making threats against them which he knew could never be carried out, the day passed, and the next, and the next, then the hour came when he was to expect another visit from Riemer.

True to his appointment, his carriage rolled into the court-yard; promptly his step was heard upon the door-sill.

Without a word von Seerhausen placed a check for nine thousand dollars in his hand, received in return the will, laid it upon the glowing fire, saw it shrivel to a light, gray, airy something which the draft carried up the chimney, and was seen no more.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN.

THE last thought of Herr von Seerhausen at night, and the first in the morning, was the loss of his nine thousand dollars; he considered that he had been shamefully robbed of it, and all pleasure in the beautiful estate to which he had fallen heir was swallowed up in regret for it.

This harassing reflection was not the only one that troubled him. He had told the steward, the overseer, and the gardener, that their services upon the estate could be dispensed with, and, as the period which he had set as a limit drew on, he saw no evidence that they were intending to depart. He concluded to hasten matters, so he reminded them that he wished to see their places vacant; whereupon they replied, insolently, that they were very well satisfied where they were, and that they did not intend making a change.

In his first anger he was tempted to order them off the place, but it soon came to his mind that such a course held elements of danger for himself; he feared to anger them, so

they remained, and were indifferent to his vexation. The gardener became intoxicated whenever it suited him, and the steward and the overseer spent a part of every night at the gaming-table in the village, their share of the money received from him disappearing like dew in the beams of the sun.

In the meantime Schoolmaster Beck in his cottage, one room of which was given up for a school-room, was far happier than Herr von Seerhausen in his castle; but one evening he came home evidently much troubled.

"Tobias," said he, "tell me honestly and truly whether you consider me very deaf. Speak to me in a lower tone than usual, but clearly, that I may know whether I am deceived in myself. I will shut my eyes, that I may not see the motion of your lips, for I wish no aid in helping me to hear."

Tobias obeyed, and in a clear, but low tone, said: "Why are you so troubled, grandfather? Who says that you are deaf? Think of Herr Schultz and Frau Hannum, who cannot hear when it thunders!"

"I heard every word, Tobias!" cried the old man in delight. "I can hear the clear tones of the children when they recite, every word of the sermon on the Sabbath, and every tone of the organ; yet the Herr von Seerhausen does

not believe me, and speaks of discharging me from the school, giving my deafness as a reason. But it will be as God wills. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge. If I must leave this cottage, where we have been so happy, I will know that it is his will, and I am resigned to whatever follows. When I received my discharge as cannoneer, and was appointed schoolmaster upon the late Baron's estate, I wept tears of joy, although I knew that at times it would require more strength to do my duty than the adjusting and firing of a four-and-twenty-pounder. Perhaps I have served as schoolmaster as long as God sees best to have me remain, and he will give me some other occupation that will suit me quite as well. I have faith that he will allow me to earn my living, and with that I am content."

"But, dear grandfather, have you heard anything lately that makes you think that you will lose the place?"

"Yes, the steward told me to-day that Herr von Seerhausen said that I was too old and deaf, and that he intended to put a younger man in my place; and, Tobias, he is willing to get the place of night watchman in Raundorf for me; and he says that if I refuse to accept it he will let me look out for myself, for he will not make any further effort for me."

"But, grandfather, why not ask the Herr Pastor about it? He might know of something that you could do."

"No, it would only trouble him, and pastors have so many people coming to them for help and advice. It is not worth while for me to try to swim against the current, so I will accept the place, and try to be satisfied."

"How soon will we have to leave here, grandfather?" questioned Tobias, looking around at the familiar objects.

"The new schoolmaster is to come the first of next week. God grant that he may be a faithful teacher to the dear children! He cannot love them more than I have done, though they were sometimes hard to manage."

"If it were only summer time when you commence work, it would not be so bad; but the nights are growing cool, and I don't know how you can stand the cold winter nights; I am afraid that it will be the death of you."

"God's will is mine; and if he says, 'Beck, you are an old soldier, and I expect you to obey; the field of battle that I have appointed for you is that of night watchman of Raundorf; do your duty,' I will go without one word of complaint."

"But it will be very hard to leave this cottage," said Tobias.

"Not so hard as it would be in the spring or summer. The grass and flowers are withering, and we have not carried in our winter firewood. We will rent a room from some one in the village, and you can, no doubt, get little odd jobs to do. I hope that the new schoolmaster will allow me still to play the organ in church, and that he will let you still ring the church-bell."

"Oh, I hope so. And, grandfather, what will we do with the goose and our three hens?"

"I was thinking that we could sell the goose and eat the chickens; we could not keep them in our new home."

"Oh, grandfather, let us have one for supper; I will get it ready and cook it, if you will let me."

"Certainly, certainly, Tobias; and while you are getting supper I will walk to the village and see if I can get a room. I will stop at the bakery and get some fresh brown bread."

Both were successful in their endeavors: Christian Beck secured a comfortable room at a nominal price, and returned in comparatively good spirits to the cottage, and Tobias had made a rich and palatable stew with the fat hen and some potatoes, which both enjoyed as only those can to whom it is a luxury, and somewhat later than usual retired to their beds and slept soundly until morning.

The first of the following week came quickly, and the new schoolmaster, with his wife and two children, moved into the cottage, vacated the day before by Christian Beck and Tobias.

The scholars had wept when their old schoolmaster bade them good-bye, but he knew that their interests would soon be centred in the new teacher, and was glad to know that he was worthy.

"The Father truly tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," said he to Tobias, as they walked along, "the anticipation of trouble is generally far worse than the reality, and in this case we find it so. We will have a comfortable home at very little expense, and my pay as night watchman will be amply sufficient for our needs. Oh! God is indeed good to us!"

"Grandfather," said Tobias, "you must let me watch with you, this your first night. I could not sleep in my bed for thinking of your walking about in the night. I must see for myself if the place of night watchman is so very tiresome as I think it, and maybe I can help you in some way. I am nearly as strong as you, and can carry the spear; besides, I can hear so well that a mouse could not nibble, or a grasshopper jump, that I would not know it."

"But I cannot give consent to your losing sleep. Young people need more than older

ones, you will be much better in bed than on your feet with me. All I have to do is to walk about and keep my eyes open, and that I will certainly do."

But Tobias was so earnest in his request that his grandfather finally yielded, and when their simple supper was over, Herr Beck laid aside his suit of black clothes and donned the uniform of watchman of the small town of Raundorf. A cloak was thrown about his shoulders, a sheep-skin cap put upon his gray head, woolen gloves upon his hands, and heavy boots upon his feet.

Tobias wrapped a piece of blanket about himself, and a few minutes before ten o'clock followed his grandfather upon his round of duty. Even at that hour but few lights were to be seen in the dwellings, and by eleven the whole place was wrapped in darkness, save here and there a faint glimmer giving token that illness or some other cause had prevented the light from being extinguished.

"Grandfather," said the boy, as they walked along, "didn't you say once that there were men who could tell how far one star was from another? How is it possible for them to know this when no one has ever come from there?"

"It does seem almost beyond belief, Tobias,

but that they can compute the distances we cannot doubt. They can tell us how far it is to the sun, the moon and the planets, and even a year beforehand they can tell when there will be an eclipse of the sun or the moon; or, in other words, when the moon passes between us and the sun, or when the earth passes between the sun and the moon."

"It is wonderful," said Tobias.

"Yes, wonderful. You know, Tobias, that the Berlin post is expected to pass every day through our village of Raundorf at an appointed hour. But faithful as the driver may be, he varies in his time of arriving, sometimes as much as fifteen minutes, although Berlin is only eight miles from here. But our earth, which passes in a wide circle around the sun every year, travels more than one hundred and twenty millions of miles, yet can always be reckoned upon to be on time. Ah, Tobias, the one who holds the planets in the hollow of his hand is a Master indeed. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and our poor feeble minds cannot understand the wonders of his creation."

"Some stars are larger than others, and some are in clusters."

"Yes, astronomers have given names to those clusters. That one is the 'Great Bear,' that one 'Orion's Belt,' that one ——" plump! the

watchman had stumbled and fallen, and lay upon the ground covered with dust.

"Are you hurt, grandfather?" cried Tobias, springing to his assistance.

"No, but what did I fall over? it has stunned me, but I am not hurt."

"It is a man, grandfather, and he smells of beer."

"Poor creature! poor creature!" said Herr Beck, "lying in the road in constant danger of being trampled to death by a horse's hoofs, or run over by wagon wheels. Who is it, Tobias?"

"The gardener at the castle," replied the boy, turning the body that the face could be seen in the light of the lantern which he turned upon him.

"What can we do with him?" said the grandfather, "it will not do to let him lie here, he might be killed."

"It would be no loss to the neighborhood, grandfather," replied the boy.

"Do not say such an inhuman and unchristian thing, my son, we must love our neighbor as ourselves, we must love the sinner though not the sin."

"We are not far from the inn, grandfather," said Tobias, ashamed of his want of charity, "there is a light there. The innkeeper is the one who got his money and made him drunk,

so should take care of him until he is able to walk to the castle."

"Yes, it seems to be the only thing we can do," replied Herr Beck, as he strove to lift the prostrate man. He was too much under the influence of liquor to stand, but with the help of Tobias he was half carried, half dragged to the inn.

Here they found four men seated at a gaming-table, of whom one was the innkeeper, who was so engrossed in the game that he did not look up upon the entrance of Christian Beck.

"The gardener of the castle is outside, Friedbert," said he, "I found him in the road, you must care for him, for the night is quite cool, and he might be run over and killed."

"Well, let him be killed," said the landlord, angrily, "go away and let me finish the game."

"You have made him incapable of taking care of himself, now you must take care of him, or answer to God and the authorities of the town for your neglect."

"Go out of here, or I will make it a rough time for you," cried Friedbert, angrily.

"This is Schoolmaster Beck," said the steward, in a low tone.

"I don't care if it is the emperor, he has no right to come in here and tell me what I must do."

"Come away, grandfather," whispered Tobias, anxiously, "he is half drunk and may hurt you."

Seeing that there was no hope of having him taken care of there, they went out, and carried the limp figure to an empty stall in the stable, covered him with hay and left him, to proceed upon their rounds.

As the clock struck five, the day watchman came to relieve them, and at the same moment they saw the steward and overseer sneaking from the inn, and trying to avoid the gaze of the few who were astir at that hour in the morning. The steward had a black eye, given him by the fist of the landlord, and miserable in mind and body they were returning to the castle totally unfit for the duties of the day.

CHAPTER VII.

TOBIAS GOES ON A JOURNEY.

IT was ten o'clock that morning and the steward had not made his appearance at the castle, and, irritated over the delay, Herr von Seerhausen went to his dwelling.

"Where is Scheinert?" inquired he of the woman who came to the door.

"He is not up yet."

"Not up? Does he know that it is past ten o'clock? Where is his sleeping-room?"

The woman pointed to a door near by, and von Seerhausen stepped quickly in.

"Ha! you worthless creature, is this the way you are attending to my affairs? You can stay in bed now as long as you choose, for you are no longer in my employ, and must leave the place to-day."

Though taken by surprise, the steward was equal to the occasion, and rising upon his elbow he looked at the angry owner with a malicious smile.

"Oh, I shall not be in the least hurry to leave, there is plenty of time, and I shall not

go until it suits me;" and he turned his face to the wall as if to take another nap.

Slash! the riding whip of the exasperated von Seerhausen came sharply down upon the face of the steward, and then he turned quickly and left the room and the house, and hurried back to the castle, locked himself in his room and refused admittance even to Bruno, his son. He comforted himself with the thought that he had treated the steward as he deserved, yet could not help feeling anxious as to the result.

It was after nine o'clock in the evening when there came a sharp ring at the door-bell, and Advocate Riemer from Berlin was announced.

"I have been passing the day upon a neighboring estate, and thought I would not go by without calling to pay my respects to Herr von Seerhausen," said he to the servant who admitted him, but to the master his reason for coming was vastly different.

"Are you bringing me some more disagreeable news, Riemer?" inquired von Seerhausen, stopping in his hurried walk up and down the apartment to greet him. "I have seen no one to-day, and would not have allowed you to be admitted, only that I thought you might have some information that it might be necessary for me to know."

"It is a necessity, but this time the importance rests with me," was the reply.

"With you? Of what interest is that tome?"

"You see before you a ruined man, Herr von Seerhausen—one who has no means to escape his creditors and arrest. I would fly to a foreign country if I had the means, but it would require much more than I could possibly raise. In a word, I have come to you for assistance."

"To leave the country?"

"To leave the country, and before the rising of another sun."

"I will assist you if you will take those other rascals with you; I mean the steward, the gardener, and the overseer."

"Thank you for the implied compliment; I will take them if they will go."

"How much do you demand for all four to go?"

"I don't know what their demand may be, but I, who have helped you get these vast possessions, should have more than they, whose only trouble was to sign their names."

"What is your demand?" questioned von Seerhausen, sharply. "Come to the point if you can."

"If you give me what all of the other three demand I shall be satisfied. If they each demand three thousand dollars to leave Germany

and never to trouble you again, I should have three times what each man gets, which would be nine thousand."

"Do you expect that as a gift, or as a loan?"

"You can call it what you please, so that I get the money."

"But suppose I refuse?" remarked von Seerhausen, looking sharply into the face of the lawyer.

"Well, then," replied the other, calmly, "I will produce the will which leaves all this splendid property to Carl von Raundorf, and I will have the pleasure of seeing you in the penitentiary."

"Bah! This is only childish babble. You seem to have forgotten that we both saw the flames shrivel up the will, and saw the strong draught carry it up the chimney."

"It is you who are indulging in childish babble, my dear sir, and I must take this opportunity to correct you. A competent advocate understands his business too well to give a will which gives the property to one man into the hands of another who wishes to be heir. It was only a worthless piece of paper that was burned; in other words, only a copy of the will. The original document is safe and secure in the place where all of my valuable papers are kept."

Herr von Seerhausen was for a moment speechless with surprise and indignation; his very lips grew pale in his endeavor to master his emotion.

"I cannot imagine why I did not suspect that you were deceiving me," said he, at length; "only the agitation of my mind in regard to there being another will must have kept the thought from my mind. You have me in your power, and I must pay the money or suffer the consequences. I shall have to mortgage the estate to raise the money."

"Of course, but there will be no difficulty about that. I have a friend who has twenty thousand dollars to lend on a first mortgage, and nothing could he consider more secure than the Raundorf estate. I have made all arrangements with him and drawn up the papers, feeling quite sure you could be brought to terms. They only await your signature and that of the witnesses, and if you will oblige me by going with me to Berlin this evening all can be settled. I shall have the money and be off to Australia."

"But the steward, overseer, and gardener, I have discharged them from my service, and they must leave to-morrow; they must go to Australia with you."

"They will go, I am sure; in truth, the steward

and overseer have promised, and there will be no trouble about the gardener."

"I shall be a different man when you are all out of the country," remarked his host.

"Thank you for another compliment, and now I will go to see the steward while you make yourself ready to accompany me to Berlin."

"But will they not go with you to Berlin in order to leave with you for Australia?"

"There is not so much haste for them as for me; they can follow later; the bargain being between you and them: no money given without a solemn promise to leave the country. I shall tell Scheinert to-night of the plan, he being the most intelligent of the three, and he can tell the others."

"Do so, it will relieve me of much embarrassment, and they will have had time to be prepared for removal."

The lawyer hurried away, and von Seerhausen made ready to go, his plan being to go to Berlin in Riemer's carriage and return by the Berlin post-chaise which passed through Raundorf at two o'clock in the morning, and walking from thence to the castle, thus avoiding the gossip of the servants, which would be the result were the coachman kept out at that unseasonable hour.

All turned out as they planned, the mortgage

was given, the money paid over, nine thousand dollars going into the pocket of Riemer, then the Herr von Seerhausen set out in the post-chaise for Raundorf, reached there safely, and set out on his walk to the castle; in the breast-pocket of his coat was the will which Riemer had delivered into his hands.

"I am glad that old Beck is night watchman," thought he, as he left the village, and passed the cottage a few hundred yards from it, which had been the home of the old schoolmaster, "he is so deaf that he will not hear my footsteps even at this quiet time of night."

In the meantime Christian Beck was walking his rounds, attending faithfully to his duties as guardian to the sleeping village and its environs, when he was surprised by a visit from Tobias, whom he thought in bed and asleep.

"Grandfather," said he, "I was awakened by hearing some one calling; listen, grandfather, we can hear it from here."

The old man bent his head, put his hand behind his ear, and listened.

"I hear nothing, Tobias, you must have been dreaming."

"There it is again, grandfather, some one is moaning as though in pain."

"Where does the sound come from, Tobias?"

"From the strip of woodland between us

and the castle. Let us go, grandfather, I know some one needs help."

"No doubt the gardener has been reeling home from the village, and has fallen; run, Tobias, and I will follow as quickly as I can."

The boy sped away, and in a few seconds returned and met Herr Beck.

"Grandfather," said he, "a man has fallen over a stump in the beech woods and is nearly dead. I believe it is Herr von Seerhausen."

"Oh, no, Tobias! it cannot be. What would he be doing there at this time of night?"

They both hurried to the place, and Christian Beck turned the light of the lantern upon the face of the prostrate man.

"It is Herr von Seerhausen," said he, in a subdued tone of sorrow, "and he is badly hurt."

The wounded man opened his eyes, fixed them upon Christian Beck, then, with the last effort of his waning strength, took a paper from his pocket and put it in the hand of the old night watchman.

Thinking it might be some request which he could grant for the dying man, Beck opened it, and by the light of his lantern found it to be the will, which he had signed, bequeathing the estate to Lieutenant von Raundorf. When he

looked up he saw that Herr von Seerhausen was no longer of earth.

"Tobias," said he, in a trembling voice, "our God has in the darkness of the night brought justice to our dear young Baron, by removing the man who robbed him of his inheritance. May he have mercy upon the poor sinner, whose last effort on earth was to do justice by giving up the will. The way of the transgressor is hard, Tobias; I don't suppose he had any pleasure in the home which he knew did not rightfully belong to him; and may the Almighty One, who knows all things, and can do all things, pardon him."

"But what are we to do, grandfather, we cannot leave him here?"

"No, take the horn, Tobias, and blow some good blasts upon it; the day watchman and perhaps some others who hear it may come to our assistance; then run to the castle and tell them to have it open to receive the body."

Tobias did as he was told, and Christian Beck remained beside the late master of the castle, who had been no friend to him, yet all was forgotten in the presence of death. It was a solemn time to the old night watchman, with no sound except the night wind in the topmost branches of the beech trees, and the bark of dogs at distant farm-houses.

"How suddenly and unexpectedly he has been called out of life," thought Herr Beck, "while I have been expecting my summons for many a day, and would be glad to go if Tobias were only a little older, that he might take care of himself. But for even that God will provide, though my weak old heart clings to the boy. But I am getting chilled sitting here, and my head feels strangely confused. The shock of this accident and my hurried walk have been too much for me. I must stir about and try to keep warm, although I am very tired. I am like an old race-horse that has grown stiff from having been out of the field so long."

Lights were seen coming from the direction of the village, then came the welcome sound of voices, and several men appeared, carrying a litter, upon which the body was placed and carried to the castle.

The day watchman came at five o'clock to relieve Christian Beck, and when he reached his room he found Tobias, who had just come from the castle.

"My boy, we see the hand of God very plainly in this visitation," said he. "As I told you the first night that I was watchman, the sun, moon, and stars have their prescribed course, and keep within it, as God designed. But man, as a rational being, is given his free

will, with the knowledge of good and evil, and a conscience which will keep him in the path of right, if he will but obey its voice, and keep himself unspotted from the world. But over all God reigns, though at times we seem to forget it. That he has made himself known in this matter is very evident. The last act of Herr von Seerhausen proved that he saw God's hand in his just punishment, and that he acknowledged it by trying to make restitution by giving up the will."

"What will we do with it, grandfather?"

"I wish you to mention to no one that we have it, except to the young Baron Carl. I would go myself to tell him and to place it in his hands, but I cannot walk so far, and I am not able to hire a conveyance. But you, Tobias, I know, are able and willing to walk to his home, and you can go to-day. We will have our breakfast, after which you must sleep three hours; then you can go."

"O grandfather, I don't need a wink of sleep," cried Tobias, eagerly; "let me go as soon as I eat my breakfast."

"No, you must have sleep. I will not lie down until I see you off, and you can easily reach there by evening. You can have a good night's rest there, and take your time to-morrow to walk back."

They soon had their coffee and rolls upon the table, and enjoyed their breakfast after their long fast.

"I will spring like a deer on this errand," said Tobias, jubilantly. "Dear Herr Baron Carl will be master at the castle, and you will again be schoolmaster, when you will not have to walk all night, but can sit when you please."

"Put that hope out of your mind, Tobias," said his grandfather, quietly, "the new schoolmaster is settled there, and gives satisfaction. He has a wife and little children depending upon him, and it would not be right for me to expect the place. I have begun to think that I am too old and deaf for the position."

"Do you think you will be a watchman all the time, grandfather?"

"That will be as God wills. Now go to bed, my boy, I will wake you in good time."

Although believing that he did not need sleep, Tobias had scarcely touched the pillow before his regular breathing told that he was in the land of dreams, and Herr Beck sat by his little stove communing over the changes which twenty-four hours had brought forth.

When the three hours were up he wakened Tobias, and gave him a bowl of warm bread and milk which he had prepared for him, and

then the traveler was ready to start upon his journey.

"Here are two groschens, my boy, to buy some refreshment on the way," said his grandfather, putting the money in his hand, "and here is the will, let me pin it to the lining of your vest pocket. Give it into no hand but that of Herr Carl, and may God bless your errand by bringing you safely home."

CHAPTER VIII.

TOBIAS SEES THE PASTOR.

THERE is no truer proverb than "We know not what a day may bring forth," and Bruno von Seerhausen, who had never been consulted upon any subject relating to the estate, was now, so far as he and his tenants knew, master of all those vast possessions. "The king is dead! long live the king!" was again exemplified, and hats were doffed and greetings were obsequious as he appeared among them for the first two days succeeding his father's death; and, though having a natural regret for his loss, he felt dazzled and bewildered by the sudden change from obscurity to prominence.

In the meantime the day in which Tobias had departed had passed slowly to Christian Beck. He missed the boy; was restless and excited, and, though exhausted from his night's walking, felt no inclination to sleep. His day's rest, however, refreshed him, and at ten o'clock he went to his night's duties.

The next day he was comforted with the thought that he should see Tobias in the even-

ing; so, after taking his simple morning meal, he went to bed, and slept most of the day; but as night drew on, and Tobias had not appeared, he grew miserably anxious.

"If anything has happened to my Tobias, I shall wish for my rest in the grave beside his mother and grandmother," thought he. "Oh! how I depend upon that boy! and yet I know that he cannot be always with me. He must soon learn a trade, and will have to leave me; then I shall be wholly alone. No, not alone; my Saviour will comfort me in some way; he always does."

It was ten o'clock, time for Christian Beck to relieve the day watchman, and Tobias was still absent. The night seemed very long to him, and at five o'clock in the morning he hurried to his room, hoping to find the boy sound asleep after his long walk; but the bed was empty, and, faint from anxiety and weariness, he sat down to consider what to do.

The voices outside his window conveyed no meaning to his ear, until he happened to catch the name of Carl von Raundorf, and then he became alert to hear more. Yes, the villagers were astir with the news that a post-chaise had passed through the village, bearing Carl von Raundorf and Tobias to the castle. Christian Beck waited to hear no more. Hurriedly he

donned cloak and cap, and, staff in hand, set out to see them.

An hour later the children gathered at the school-house, but books seemed to be the least of their thoughts. They were standing about an object that seemed to appall them, yet they could not turn their eyes from it.

"What is it? Why do you not come into school?" questioned the schoolmaster from the window.

Only the nodding of heads and the pointing of fingers to some object gave reply, and the schoolmaster took his hat from the peg and went out. Leaning against the end of the school-room was a man in the uniform of a watchman, his staff planted firmly in the soft earth by the crossed hands resting upon it, his sheepskin cap on the ground beside him, his thin white hair stirring in the morning breeze, and his eyes raised to heaven.

"He is dead!" said the schoolmaster, touching the crossed hands.

The boys nodded, and looked on, with curious, but tear-dimmed eyes.

At that moment Tobias came running through the beech forest, on his way from the castle to his home, and seeing the boys gathered about some object he halted to see what it was.

"Oh, it is grandfather!" cried he, in a

shocked voice, as the tears rained from his eyes.

"Don't grieve so, my son," said the schoolmaster, "he has only gone home; he is at rest."

"Oh! I know it," cried poor Tobias," but I fear he was anxious because I did not come last night. I intended to, but the Herr Baron said it would save me a long walk if I would wait and come in the post-chaise with him. Then we had breakfast at the castle, and I was hurrying home to tell grandfather the good news before he went to take his sleep; O grandfather! dear, dear grandfather!"

"Here comes the Herr Pastor," exclaimed one of the boys, "he has heard of it, and come, as he always does when folks are in trouble."

"No need for tears here, dear children," said he, stepping among them, "only smiles of rejoicing for a weary pilgrim safe in his Father's house. As soldier, as hero, as Christian, as one who lived to do his duty, such, Tobias, was your grandfather. Without fear has he for years looked upon death, ready to go at a moment's summons. He was pure of heart; he shall see God."

"Grandfather had this cottage and school," said Tobias, weepingly, "maybe he came here when he knew he was going to die.'

"That we cannot know," replied the pastor, "but dear friend, continued he, turning to the schoolmaster, "would you be willing to allow him a place in the school-room until he is taken to the grave?"

"I give free and full consent, and will oblige in any other way I can."

The funeral of Herr von Seerhausen, and that of the night watchman, was upon the same day, at the same church-yard; and while the wealthy proprietors of neighboring estates in handsome carriages followed Herr von Seerhausen, only the humble villagers who had known Christian Beck gathered about the plain casket and followed him to the grave.

"See, dear children," said the kind pastor, "the smile of peace is upon his aged face. He was true and faithful to the end, endured the crosses and disappointments of life as a Christian should, and has gone to his reward. The remembrance of him is to us a benediction."

The school-children whom he had taught followed the casket, bearing flowers to leave upon his grave, their clear voices joining in a hymn he had loved. Next to them came the young Baron von Raundorf and Tobias, and when the funeral was over the boy returned to the castle, as had been agreed upon, and in the young Baron he found protector and friend,

the amiable Baroness and the children showing him every kindness.

The will, bequeathing the estate to Lieutenant Carl, was proven, and the witnesses to the former will being out of employment, and having squandered their money gained by falsehood, left the neighborhood so hastily that Scheinert forgot to take his wife and children, and the Baron Carl, pitying their poverty, allowed them to remain in the cottage. Baron Carl paid over the nine thousand dollars which his uncle had bequeathed to the church, the pastor, the school and the old schoolmaster, Tobias inheriting the share of his grandfather, which was invested to the best advantage until the boy should come of age.

The elder von Seerhausen having used all his means in trying to secure the estate, there was nothing left for the son, who was intemperate, without occupation, or the ability to earn his own support; and, as an evidence of the forgiving spirit of Baron Carl, he was invited to make his home at the castle, and apartments in one of the wings were given him, handsomely furnished and comfortable.

The great desire of Lieutenant Carl upon taking possession of his estate was to do his duty in every way, and make all about him as happy and useful to themselves and others as

possible. He considered it as useless to expect a good crop of grain from ground that had not been cultivated, as to expect ill-used, discontented work-people to render good service.

One of his first cares was the school and its pupils. "As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined," was a maxim in which he put much faith, so he visited there during school hours, and praised the diligent and rebuked the idle.

He saw that the cottages of his laborers were kept comfortable, and, in order to give them entertainment during their leisure hours, he had a library of attractive books and papers, and the newest and most interesting games. He provided the best machines for the cultivation of his land, that the time and strength of his working people might be saved, and they in turn were faithful in their several departments. Tobias was treated as a son, and was of use to him in many ways. The boy often caught himself wishing that his grandfather had lived until Baron Carl had taken possession, for he was sure that a home would have been offered him at the castle, and then there would have been no more night-watching for him. He often questioned within himself why God took him when there was such a prospect of rest upon earth, and resolved to ask the pastor.

"Why did God take him?" echoed the good

Herr Seeback, when Tobias on his way to school the next morning stopped at the gate of the parsonage, where the pastor happened to be standing. "My son, weak, human beings should not question our Creator as to his reasons. He is good and wise, and knows what is best for his children. What would a few years of rest, with the infirmities of age upon him, be to your grandfather in comparison to the glory of heaven in the companionship of his loved ones, where we all have the promise that we shall be satisfied? His work on earth was finished; he is at rest, while we who were his fellow-pilgrims toil on until it is our Master's will to grant us release."

"But I cannot help grieving that I did not come home the day he expected me," said the boy, with tear-dimmed eyes. "Instead, I enjoyed my visit to a new place, and was very willing to accept the kind Baron's invitation to stay and ride back in the post-chaise with him. I knew I could not get back until after poor grandfather had gone on duty, yet I stayed, and have been sorry ever since."

"My son, there are but few indeed whom death robs of their friends but grieve for what they might have done to render them happier while on earth. You were a great comfort to your grandfather, were dutiful and obedient,

and for this mistake should not grieve further than to let it make you more thoughtful of the living."

Much comforted, Tobias kept on his way to school, and all who saw him that day noticed that he was happier than he had been since his grandfather's death.

"I will never forget the dear pastor's words," thought he, "and will tell them to all that are in trouble, as I have been, that they, too, may be comforted. And I will be kind and helpful to the living, that I may have nothing to regret should I have to part from them."

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE FRIGHT.

LEADING from the wing of Raundorf Castle, in which were the apartments of Bruno von Seerhausen, was a covered walk to the garden and the beech forest beyond, and was used as a play-ground for the children in wet weather.

Here Otto could ride his rocking-horse, and Lila build play-houses for her dolls, and Tobias was watcher and helper when not at school. Their joyous shouts and the rolling of their balls reached the quiet apartments in the second story of the wing, where von Seerhausen passed most of his time, and having no liking for children, particularly for the two who had supplanted him in possession of the estate, he was angry and revengeful, and set his mind to work to plan some way to stop the playing in the covered walk. Tobias came in for a share of his hatred, for it was through him that the young Baron had heard of the will in his favor, and he resolved to make him suffer for it, though in order to carry out his plan successfully, he never mentioned to any one that he was annoyed by the noise.

One rainy day the children were rolling their balls, and their merry shouts when the target was knocked down were more plainly heard in von Seerhausen's room than in the walk itself, and his anger grew unbearable, while, unconscious of the fright that was being prepared for him, Tobias continued to set up the target, enjoying the game as much as did the little ones.

"Now you take the mallet, and I will set up the target," exclaimed Otto, passing it to Tobias, who struck a ball with such force that it rolled against the ankle of von Seerhausen, who stopped at the open door to watch the game. It was light, and could not by any chance have hurt him, but he chose to call the accident an indignity, and resolved to put his plan in execution that very evening. But he gave no sign of having noticed it, but praised the skill of Tobias, the patience of Otto in setting up the target so often, and patted Lila's curly head, and kissed her on the forehead. The children were charmed to have him a spectator to their sports, but Tobias had a vague fear of him, and avoided him all he could.

"He is angry because the ball rolled against him," thought the boy, "he never looked at me that way before."

That night Tobias went to bed at his usual time, his sleeping-place being the ground floor

of the wing, directly under the apartments of von Seerhausen, and distant from those of the other occupants of the castle. He was just dropping asleep when from the covered walk he heard a sound between a howl, a whine and a growl. It was accompanied by the whirring sound of wind among cedar trees, and was altogether so weird and unearthly that the boy was terribly frightened. He longed to hear the footsteps of von Seerhausen overhead, proving that he, too, heard the noise, but all was still. Fearfully he glanced toward the door which led to the covered alley, and to his horror saw it slowly open, and a tall figure clothed in white glided toward him. In an agony of terror the boy covered his head with the bed coverings. He lay for a long time fearing to look out, but at length, hearing no sound, he ventured to do so, and found his strange visitor gone. But he slept no more, and when he arose in the morning his head ached with excitement and loss of sleep. The Baron had gone to Berlin on business, and would not be home for several days, and Tobias longed to tell the Baroness and the servants, but feared being laughed at for his cowardice.

That night, before going to bed, he locked the door leading to the covered walk, and lay awake, dreading the return of his visitor. At

times he held his breath and listened, but he heard nothing. At length he dropped asleep, and was awakened by the same unearthly sound of the night before, and, opening his eyes, saw, close by his bedside, the tall white figure, which glided through the door that Tobias had locked. Almost breathless from terror, the poor boy covered his head. When he could endure the suspense no longer, he looked out, and in fiery letters over the door he read. "Death to all noisy boys."

Tobias knew nothing of phosphorus, with which marks can be made only seen in the dark, and, supposing them to be the work of an evil spirit, he lost consciousness.

He was scarcely able to rise the next morning, and his pale face, subdued manner, and want of appetite attracted the attention of all; but he kept his secret, waiting and hoping to hear some other member of the family speak of hearing the strange noise, as he could then tell them without fear of their laughing at his imaginary fears; but no one mentioned it. He was afraid to enter the covered walk, even in daytime, and refused to play, though a cousin of the children was visiting them, and begged him to set up the target for them; and their voices at length reached the Baroness.

"Tobias," said she, "I think it very selfish

in you not to oblige the children, particularly when they have a visitor. I never knew you to act so before."

The boy blushed painfully, and hesitated for a reply.

"If the gracious lady will stay here, I will play, but I am afraid," said he.

"Afraid!" said the Baroness, surprised beyond measure. "What in the world can harm you here, with no one but the children? Are you ill, Tobias? You certainly do not look well."

"I am well, but I am afraid to play here; it is death to all noisy boys."

"Tobias, what do you mean?" said the lady, really alarmed.

"It is written above my door," said he, pointing to his sleeping-room.

"There is nothing here," said she, stepping in and glancing up.

"It was there last night; I saw it as plainly as I ever saw anything in my life."

"Oh, don't be silly, Tobias; go and play with the children, and forget this nonsense," laughed the Baroness, good-naturedly, as she turned and went back to her room. She had scarcely reached it when she heard a startled scream, and, running out, she saw Otto pale with terror, and Lila screaming with fright.

"What is the matter?" cried she; "who has frightened the children?"

No one answered, but Otto pointed to a distant corner of the walk close by the open door.

"What is it, Otto? I see nothing," said the mother.

"The children have seen a ghost, gracious lady," said one of the old servants. "We heard strange noises in this walk last night."

"A ghost, Peter! What do you mean by such foolishness, and before the children?"

"But there is one in the castle; it came before the gracious lady was here; it kept us all from sleeping."

"Why have you never mentioned it before?"

Because we were afraid of frightening you; besides, it never appears except in the wing, and the noises all come from this direction. We all heard it last night, and said that Tobias must be a sound sleeper not to be disturbed by it."

Tobias, feeling sure now that he would not be laughed at, told his story.

"I believe that it is the spirit of the old Herr von Seerhausen," said Peter, doggedly. "He was unhappy because the estate did not rightfully belong to him, so he cannot rest peacefully in his grave."

"And I know that it is no spirit from the other world, for such visitations cannot be," replied the Baroness; "but I do believe that it is some wicked human being, who, for some evil purpose, is trying to frighten us. We will not let the matter rest here; you will see, when the Baron comes home, that there will be no more of this nonsense. Ask Herr von Seerhausen to come down; he must have heard the noise."

"Herr von Seerhausen is not in his apartments," replied Peter; "I saw him go out more than an hour ago."

"It was an ugly boo-boo," sobbed Lila, "a black boo-boo."

The little one trembled with fear, and crept closer to her mother, looking fearfully at the distant corner.

"It is a terribly evil-minded person who could frighten any one, much less a child," said the Baroness, indignantly.

At that moment Herr von Seerhausen came in from his walk, and they told him the story.

"I wish that the ghost would pay me a visit," said he, in his sneering, sarcastic tone; "it would never repeat the experiment."

Little Lila did not recover quickly from the fright; a fever set in, and a physician was summoned from the village.

"Her nerves have suffered a serious shock," said he; "she must be watched very carefully, and nothing must be allowed to agitate her, or there will be danger of convulsions."

Filled with anxiety, the Baroness did not leave the bedside during the whole night, but watched the little one as only a tender mother can. Toward morning the sedatives administered took effect, and Lila slept. Then the Baroness went to the library and brought her writing-materials, and by six o'clock a messenger was on his way to Berlin, bearing her letter telling the Baron of the whole affair.

In the distant wing Tobias had heard the wailing, moaning, whirring sounds, and had seen the tall white figure glide through the door which he had not only locked, but bolted.

CHAPTER X.

A GOOD RIDDANCE.

THE next morning Tobias made a resolve, and that was, to visit Pastor Seeback and tell him the whole story.

"I cannot stay in the castle," concluded he, "I would rather be a watchman and walk all night; there is a spirit that haunts the wing where I sleep, and I shall die of fright."

"A spirit! What do you mean by a spirit?"

"Peter calls it a ghost."

"A ghost! and what, pray, is a ghost?" laughed the pastor, cheerfully.

"Peter says it is something from the other world, and has neither flesh nor bone."

"And are you, a great, strong boy, afraid of anything that has neither flesh nor bone?"

"But it comes through doors which are bolted; and Peter says it is the spirit of Herr von Seerhausen that cannot rest because he wanted the estate."

"Oh, my dear boy, don't let the sayings of an ignorant old man influence you. There is no such thing as a ghost, nor can a spirit, good or bad, return from the grave. The souls of

those who die in the Lord are too happy to wish to trouble the poor creatures of earth by frightening them, and those who die in their sins cannot come. It is generally in the obscurity of darkness and night that we hear of these spirits appearing, and it is generally the ignorant and superstitious who imagine they see them."

"But Otto and Lila saw the spirit in the daytime; and Lila has been sick from fright, and the doctor came to the castle to see her."

"But they are little children, and easily frightened."

"Dear pastor, if you could hear the noise it makes you would not wonder that I am afraid. It whines and moans and growls all at one time, and there is a whirring sound like a very high wind in cedar trees;" and poor Tobias turned pale at the remembrance of it.

"What does the Frau Baroness think of all this?" questioned the pastor.

"At first she said there were no such things as ghosts; but I believe she has changed her mind, for she looks pale and almost sick from fear, and longs for the Baron to come home."

"Did you tell her of the words that shone like fire over your door?"

"Yes, but she could not see them."

"I can explain this apparent mystery, dear

Tobias. Have you never in walking through the woods at night seen a piece of decayed timber which emitted a dim light?"

"No, I never did."

"It will do so, particularly in some conditions of the atmosphere. Well, that light is called phosphorescent, and there is a chemical substance called phosphorus, of a yellowish color, with which one can draw figures or letters upon a wall which will only be seen in the dark. It is my belief that some evil-minded person has done this to frighten you, and ——"

He was interrupted by a grating, growling sound, which caused Tobias to spring to his feet trembling and pale with terror.

"The spirit!" he whispered, "it has followed me here."

"Do you think so, does it sound like your ghost?" questioned the pastor, "then come with me, and it can be easily explained."

He took the hand of Tobias, and led him into the play-room adjoining, and at the same moment the three grandchildren of the pastor rushed in from another door.

"O grandpa! wind up the monk; we want to hear him play."

The pastor did so, amid the shouts and laughter of the children over the whining and groaning of the grotesque toy.

"Now, you see that what you thought was a spirit is only an ingenious piece of handiwork which I have bought to amuse the little ones; and you say the winding of the machinery sounds like your ghost?"

"Yes, but not so loud, and there is no whirring sound like the wind."

"Now, Tobias," said the pastor, when they returned to his study, "I am about to entrust a secret to your keeping, and do not wish you to tell any one until I give you leave. I will come to-night to the castle and sleep with you, and will watch for the ghost. I will not come until it is dark, and you must be on the look-out for me, and let me into your room without any one suspecting a word of it. I am but a weak man, but I place myself under the best of protection, that of my God and Saviour. So you may expect me, Tobias, and God willing, I shall not fail you."

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" cried the boy, a great burden lifted from his heart, "I shall watch for you, and no one shall know you are there."

He went home, and all noticed that he looked happier, but none suspected the cause. In the meantime the messenger had returned from Berlin with the word that Baron von Raundorf had left Berlin upon some public business, but

would return there that evening, when the message would be promptly given him, and with this the Baroness was forced to be satisfied, though longing for his presence.

It was quite dark when Tobias heard the light tap of the pastor's hand against the window of his room, and in a second he had flown to the door, and Herr Seeback was inside without any one having seen him. Then Tobias went about his evening duties, and when bedtime came he returned to his apartment.

The pastor had bolted the outer door, pulled the bed from the wall, so that both could jump quickly to the floor when the spirit appeared, then prayers were said, and both retired without removing their clothing, Tobias at the side furthest from the door.

The boy was soon in a sound sleep, and the full moon shone through the large windows, lighting the whole apartment. The castle clock in the great hall had struck the hour of twelve, when the listening pastor heard a singular sound of moaning, whining and growling, and with it was the whirring of wind among cedar trees; and at the same moment the door which he had left locked slowly opened, and two white robed figures glided in. The pastor at the first sound had slipped from the bed and hidden behind the curtains at the head, and

watched till the tall figure and the other—scarcely reaching to his shoulder—stopped at the bedside, and commenced pulling the bedclothes from Tobias. With one blow of his fist he felled the one nearest him—which happened to be the little spirit—to the floor, while the other ghost, filled with astonishment at the unexpected and hidden attack, remained motionless. In a moment they seemed to recover themselves, and rushed out of the door; and Tobias, gaining courage, flew after them, grasping the little spirit and throwing it down.

"Herr von Seerhausen, Herr von Seerhausen, help me!" cried the well-known voice of Albert, the son of Steward Scheinert.

But the greater spirit heeded not, but running to a side door ran up the steps, gained his apartments, and locked and bolted the door.

"Oh, oh! don't pull my hair, Tobias, it was only a joke," cried Albert.

"Only a joke to frighten nearly to death the good little Lila, who never did you any harm? Oh, you wicked, wicked boy!"

"And the other is Herr von Seerhausen!" exclaimed the pastor; "oh, the shameful ingratitude toward his benefactor."

"He coaxed me to be the other ghost," whimpered Albert, "I am not to blame."

"That is the cry of evil-doers, they always put the blame on others," said the pastor. "Why did he select you for a partner in his wickedness, why not choose Tobias? Because he knew you would agree to it, and no money could influence Tobias to lend himself to such an evil as frightening any one."

"Tobias pulled my hair, and I will pay him for it the next time I get a chance."

"You will never get a chance if I can help it," responded Tobias, promptly.

"Now," continued the pastor, "I shall stand at Herr von Seerhausen's door, and I wish you, Tobias, to go and tell the Baroness that we have captured not only one ghost, but two. Take care not to alarm little Lila, and when you return, go tell the servants."

Tobias did as he was requested, and although the Baroness was greatly relieved to know what it was that had frightened them, it distressed her beyond measure that one to whom the Baron had shown the kindness that he had to von Seerhausen should reward him by such treachery.

The servants had heard the tumult without, and were gathered in a group in the servants' hall, afraid to venture out; now, that their fears were allayed by the message of Tobias, they gathered outside by Herr von Seerhausen's door.

"How did you make that queer, screeching noise?" said Tobias to Albert.

"With a rusty saw and an oak board, and at the same time we groaned and snarled."

"How did you make the sound of the rushing wind?"

"By whirling a cedar bush around as fast as it would go."

Tobias was ashamed that he had been frightened by such simple means, and resolved never again to cover his head, but to put on a bold face and see what the mystery was.

"But," questioned the pastor, "by what means were the children frightened?"

"I don't know, I have only been with Herr von Seerhausen twice, and that was at night, but I know he has a frightful mask which he got in Berlin. It is black, and has great eyes and teeth, and he has something which makes letters on the wall, and you cannot see them except when it is dark. He put them over the door in the room where Tobias sleeps."

In the meantime the pastor had rapped at the door of von Seerhausen's apartments, but there was no response.

"You poor, miserable creature," said the pastor, through the key-hole, "will you not come out and give some reason for your actions?"

Before there could be any reply the gate was

thrown open, and two horsemen rode rapidly in.

"It is the Baron and the groom," said Peter, "and they must have come like the wind; look how wet the horses are."

The Baron threw himself from his horse and came to the pastor.

"Who is the wretch that has been frightening my wife and children?" questioned he. "Let me punish him as he deserves."

"If you can get him out of his hiding-place, Herr Baron," smiled the pastor. "We have tried, but have not succeeded. They were punished with their own weapons, for they thought that I was a spirit, and they fled in fright."

"Who fled? Who was it?"

"Scheinert's son Albert and Herr von Seerhausen."

"Von Seerhausen!" cried the Baron, in a shocked tone; "certainly it was not he! A man who has eaten at my table, to whom I have given a home, and whom, in spite of his failings, I have treated as a friend! Where is he?"

"In his apartments, with the door bolted," replied the pastor. "But, dear Herr Baron, compose yourself, and consider. Do nothing in hasty anger that you may regret all your

after life. Do not let your indignation lead you into temptation. Leave the miserable man to his own conscience."

"But he has none," cried the Baron, "or he never could have had the heart to torment my helpless family in this way, and those who have always been kind to him. I see through von Seerhausen's plans: he wishes to frighten my wife, children, and servants until they will be unwilling to live in the castle which he looks upon as his. Get an axe, Peter. If he won't unlock the door, we must break it open."

Peter hurried off for the axe; the door was broken open; all rushed upstairs; but, to the secret joy of the pastor, the bird had flown.

"Believe me, dear Herr Baron, it is better for all concerned that he has taken refuge in flight; bloodshed might have been the outcome of your meeting with him, and then life-long remorse to you, or life-long grief to your wife and children. His punishment will be great enough, for he has cast away a good home, and for his misdeeds he is a wanderer upon the earth. His Master's eye is upon him; let him go where he will, he cannot escape that."

"But I cannot imagine how he left his apartments without being seen," said the Baron, "and the window is too high for him to leap from it without injury. Here boy," continued

he, turning to Albert, "how did you get into the castle? Tell me the truth, that your punishment may be lighter."

"I came up the narrow steps from a vault under the castle, and Herr von Seerhausen held a light to show me the way."

"But there is no door in this room leading to a flight of steps."

"Yes, if you press a little button under the foot of that marble image in the corner a door will fly open in the wall behind it, and there are the steps."

The Baron pressed the button, and found the story correct.

"Astonishing!" said he, "I never knew of this door. Seerhausen must have had it put here when he was owner of the castle."

"But how did you unbolt the door below in my room?" questioned Tobias.

"When it was only bolted we slipped the bolt back by means of a string which worked in a groove. We did this from the outside; the night you locked the door, we crept down from this room and opened it from the inside, while the noise in the covered walk was so loud you did not hear it."

"Your father fled from the neighborhood and my estate to escape his just deserts at the hands of the law," said the Baron, sternly;

"out of charity to your mother and yourself I have allowed you to remain in your cottage; but now you must go. Tell her the cottage must be vacant by this time to-morrow, or it will not be well for you."

Albert left the castle and ran home, glad that his punishment was no heavier.

"I have no doubt but von Seerhausen has escaped through the secret door," continued the Baron; "well, I shall not search for him, but am only glad that such an evil element is no longer under my roof."

CHAPTER XI.

IN QUARTERS.

WITH the disappearance of Bruno von Seerhausen, and the removal of the steward's family from the estate, the peace of the Baron's home returned. Otto and Lila recovered their health and spirits, and in the covered walk could make as much noise as they pleased.

Riches had not changed the Baron and Baroness, they were the same cheerful, useful, happy Christians they were when in their humble home, and were training their children in the love of their Saviour. The poor, the sick, the afflicted and homeless found help and sympathy, and Pastor Seeback found in them valuable assistants in his pastoral work.

Spring came, and mother earth was awakening from her winter sleep, trees and shrubbery were putting on their mantle of green, and all nature appeared rejoicing over the coming of summer.

Tobias, under the training of his pious grandfather, and in the society of the good von

Raundorfs, had grown to be a consistent Christian, and longed to become a member of the visible church. Pastor Seeback believing him to be fully prepared for admission, he was received in full communion, as it happened, just at the age when his beloved friend, the Baron had, when in the home of his uncle Raundorf, received the same rite.

Tobias had lost father and mother, and the companionship of his loved grandfather, but now, under the friendship and care of his loved pastor, and the congregation over which he was guardian, he felt that he was not alone in the world, that he had many friends and helpers if need be, and was truly happy in the good home to which Providence had guided him.

"I ought to be happy and contented," thought he, "one of the happiest boys in the world. My grandfather gave me his blessing, the Baron and Baroness treat me just as they do their own children, and the little ones look on me as a brother. The dear pastor is as kind as a father to me, and the church people speak kindly when I meet them. The schoolmaster praises me, and lets me play the organ, and Boaz, the old shepherd, teaches me to play upon the Alpine horn."

At that moment he saw one of the farm-hands coming through the great gate into the

fields, driving a fine pair of horses attached to a plow.

"Let me go with you, Gottlob," said he, eagerly, "I do so want to learn to plow."

"Well, come along, this is Saturday and a holiday, it is not every day that you get the chance to follow me to the field."

"Do you know, Gottlob," said Tobias, as they trudged along, "that it was a king in Egypt, named Osiris, who invented the first plow? Yes, and guided it himself. And Joseph II., Emperor of Austria, would plow, and his courtiers walked along by his side and their silken hose became soiled with the moist earth; and a great Roman general could till his own soil and raise his own turnips, while I, a country boy, and without any trade in the world, know nothing of plowing."

"I call that a great king that invented the plow," said Gottlob, thoughtfully, "he knew something beside the taste of good pastry, if his name was O. Syrup."

"Osiris, not O. Syrup," laughed Tobias.

"Oh, well, it is no difference what his name was now, the main thing is, that he knew how to plow. That is the greatest thing to know. If a man can raise potatoes and grain, and has such soil as this to raise them in, he ought to be

a happy man. Now, give heed, Tobias, and see me set the plow."

"Oh, yes, I can do that, now let me try to plow."

"Not just yet, I must run the first furrow, which must be as straight as a ruler, then the others can be run by it. Look, Tobias!" pointing to a flock of crows that had alighted on the hedge, and were watching the proceedings, "here they come, waiting for the rich earth to be turned up that they may feast. They really appear to know too much for creatures that are not human; and when we plant the corn you will see what a nuisance even crows can make of themselves."

He plowed once around the great field, then Tobias took his turn at the work, but it was far harder than he thought to keep the plow straight and to sink it deep enough, without having the guiding of the horses, and he soon gave it up into the skilful hands of Gottlob, and returned to the castle.

"Tobias," said a voice, as he was passing the barn, "come in and help us thresh out this grain, here is a flail waiting for you."

Tobias complied, and running up to the barn floor his flail was soon resounding merrily, and he was getting heated and tired when Pastor Seeback passed, and nodded pleasantly to him.

"That is right," said he, "keep the hands busy and Satan will get no chance to put work in them."

"Oh, dear pastor," said Tobias, laying aside his flail, "I am glad you happened along, I would like to ask you a question."

"Very well, my boy, I am always glad to answer them when I can."

"I was walking to-day beside Gottlob and the plow, and we were speaking of potatoes, and we wondered when they were such good food for poor people, and cheaper than grain, why God did not make them keep good all the year round; that appears to be their only failing."

"No failing, but an advantage," replied Herr Seebeck, "see, Tobias, if potatoes kept as well as grain, people who raise them would be tempted to hold them for higher prices, and those who have no land to raise them would be unable to buy. Now, think of the privation it would be to those who make potatoes their staple food. Truly God is good and wise."

"Gottlob and I never thought of that. Yes, it is better that potatoes do not keep good all the year."

"Soldiers are coming!" cried Leise, the goose-herder. "They are already at the bridge! Soldiers! soldiers!"

Even in that country, where every man is a soldier for some part of his life, the cry of "fire! fire!" could not create more excitement than that of "soldiers!" All who could do so rushed out to see them. Out of fields and granaries came workmen; out of kitchens came maids; out of schools came the scholars; from work-benches, the wood-carvers; from stores, the salesmen; everybody running at the sound of trumpets, for the soldiers were not averse to having it known that they were on the march.

Although a company of soldiers is frequently made up of stalwart country boys, perhaps some of them from the neighborhood through which they are passing, yet, as cavalry, they were regarded by the Raundorf people with a certain awe, for they looked very noble indeed, mounted upon handsome horses, their bright weapons shining in the sun, and tall helmets shading their fair, handsome faces. It appeared that the horses felt the pride which animated the breasts of their masters, for they arched their necks and champed their bits as though knowing that thousands of dollars would not pay for the equipment of even that one regiment passing through Raundorf that beautiful spring day.

Although living in a country which maintains such a great standing army, Tobias had

never before seen a cavalry company, and he was almost bewildered by the splendor. His heart beat high, and he then and there resolved to be a soldier.

Among the delighted lookers-on there was one who was anything but cheerful at the sight, and that one was Parson Seeback.

"I cannot rejoice when I see a company of soldiers," said he, sadly, "for the thought always comes to me, Why are these well-formed, strong, healthy men, these noble horses, these bright weapons, gathered in a common cause? And the answer comes, To wound, to kill; to bring anguish upon tender wives and mothers, and weeping to little ones who should know nothing of sorrow. Very attractive is the profession of arms, but it is like the bitter pill coated with sugar; and all the glare and glitter of dress-parade cannot atone for the real hardship and danger."

"But every country has soldiers, hasn't it?" questioned Tobias.

"Yes, but not such an immense standing army as ours. At least two millions of able-bodied men are in the army, who could be added to the working force of the Fatherland, and many hundreds of thousands of horses."

"But the Herr Baron is an officer," said Tobias, reflectively, "and he is so good and kind

that I am sure he would not be willing to cause trouble to anyone."

"It is every man's duty to protect his country, and in the Fatherland we have many noblemen for whom there seems to be no occupation, seeing that the rules which govern society prohibit the members of the nobility from engaging in manual labor of any kind, or the professions of law, medicine, or the ministry; there seems nothing but the army for our young noblemen. They may be good and tender-hearted, as I well know our kind friend Baron Carl is, but let war break out, and the most peaceful of them will, during the horrors of a battle, lead his men over the bodies of the fallen. Yes, war is a terrible thing, and nothing can make it anything else."

"My grandfather was a kind-hearted man and a Christian, yet he was in the Seven Years' War," persisted Tobias.

"Yes, what you say of him is true; but I have heard him many times deplore the necessity, if necessity it be, of war. Christians should not make war against their fellows. Not for conquest, not for self-glory, or for glory of one's country, should Christians be willing to fight; only in self-defence is it allowable for one who does unto others as he wishes them to do unto him."

Tobias had heard all the words of the pastor, but they could not take his interest from the soldiers; his boyish heart was filled with enthusiasm, and he longed for the opportunity to show his bravery. His delight was past expressing when he found that the regiment was to be quartered at Raundorf and other places around the neighborhood. Every family had one or more, and the pastor's wife had agreed to accommodate ten, while at the castle many of the officers were to be entertained, and the spirits of Tobias were very high indeed at the thought of being so near to soldiers. For the few days they remained Tobias divided his time about equally between the parsonage and the castle, seeing commanders and commanded.

The evening of their arrival he was at the parsonage, where Frau Seeback and her maid had prepared a good hot supper, and had it upon the table in readiness for them the moment they should arrive.

"We have to attend first to our horses," replied they, curtly, and Tobias followed them to the stalls, while Frau Seeback had the viands returned to the oven to keep warm. For the accommodation of the horses the pastor had given up even the cow-stall, yet the cavalrymen, hungry and tired, grumbled at the meagre accommodations while feeding, water-

ing, and rubbing down their horses; and Tobias began to think that, after all, the infantry had quite as easy times on foot as the cavalrymen on horseback; for not a particle of rest or refreshment could they take until their horses were in perfect order, saddles and bridles put carefully away, and the dust of travel wiped from their weapons.

When he returned to the castle he found the stables filled with fine horses, and the whole place thronged with officers, their aids and servants; and the servants of the castle were roasting, broiling, and baking, and the great kitchen was fragrant with good things, as, indeed, it had been for several days.

Tobias was filled with excitement over these splendid doings, and was perfectly satisfied to give up his room in the wing, while he slept upon a settle in the kitchen, soundly and peacefully, while the night watchman who had succeeded Christian Beck kept strict guard, that fires might not result from the smoking of pipes and cigars by the soldiers.

About two o'clock in the morning the tired cavalrymen were aroused from slumber by the shrill sound of a trumpet. They hurried to the stables, saddled and bridled their horses, and placed themselves in position at the command of their officer. The roll was called, and the

laggards were severely reprimanded and punished. At the end of fifteen minutes they were allowed to return to their quarters, but not to sleep long, for they had to arise early to attend to their horses and polish their weapons.

"You see it was only a false alarm, Tobias," said old Peter, "and is done for the purpose of training them for sudden attacks. Oh, my boy, a soldier's life is not one of play, but of labor and excitement, even in time of peace."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO BATTLES.

BY eight o'clock that morning the cavalry set out at the sound of the trumpet, and, followed by all the boys of the neighborhood, went to the training-field, and Tobias was amazed at the severity of the discipline, and the searching scrutiny men and horses were subjected to by the officers. If a soldier was a moment too late, if the weapons or mountings were not as bright as polish could make them, a saddle-girth the least slack, a stirrup not adjusted to the proper length, it was a subject for reprimand.

A sham battle was fought, as earnestly as though it were the real thing, and Tobias was delighted at the wonderful order and discipline of the troops. At first, a part of the regiment moved toward the enemy at a slow trot, which grew faster and faster until the horses broke into a gallop; the earth trembled with the beating of many hoofs, and the orders of the officers and the clash of sabres was a scene of exciting interest to Tobias. Then a trumpet sounded, and instantly the opposing forces dropped into

line, the only sound being the snorting and hurried breathing of the horses. As the dust cleared away, it was found that two men and three horses were missing, and later on it was ascertained that one of the men had been thrown and killed instantly, and another was so injured by a horse stepping upon him that it would be some time before he could be in line again. Two of the horses were injured, one so badly that it was ordered to be shot, and the other limped from a sprain.

The Colonel of the regiment, much disturbed by these accidents, called the officers together, and spoke to them in a quick, angry tone.

"Herr Major von Biskowitz, I have good cause to find fault with your company in point of training and discipline. Your soldiers are not prompt, and two of your horses had loose shoes. In my report to the commander I certainly cannot speak well of your company; you must in the future be stricter with your men."

The handsome face of the Major flushed with anger; he was about to retort, but remembering that it was his superior officer he restrained the impulse; instead, he glanced at his brother officers to see if there were any evidence of rejoicing over his humiliation, and seeing such signs, he gave the military salute to his superior, and galloped back to the men

to vent his wrath upon the officer next lowest in his command.

"Herr Lieutenant von Schönfeld," said he, angrily, "because of your negligence I have been severely reprimanded. I wish in future that you would look more to your men, and less into the looking-glass. Both the accidents were to the men in your company, caused by loose shoes upon their horses. Do you leave it to me to inspect the hoofs of every horse in the company?"

Young von Schönfeld turned pale with mortification, for not only in the presence of his men, but of the villagers and other spectators was the rebuke given, all looking on in surprise to see the gayly dressed and handsome young officer receive such harsh criticism.

"Herr Major," exclaimed he, "in exchange for this undeserved charge I would say that —"

"Be silent!" exclaimed the Major, peremptorily, "or I will report you."

"Don't speak, von Schönfeld," cautioned a brother officer, in a low tone, "remember he is our superior officer."

Seeing the truth of this, there was nothing left the Lieutenant but to bite his lips, and lean forward to smooth the mane of his horse, and the moment the Major's back was turned he put spur to it, and galloped back to his men

to vent his wrath upon them for their lack of attention to orders, many of them so much older than himself that they were soldiers when he was a school-boy.

Tobias was filled with astonishment at all this jarring.

"Ah," thought he, "a soldier's life is not so pleasant, after all; if our steward or overseer were to speak to our work-people like that there would not be one of them on the estate by night. I saw tears in the eyes of the Major, and the Lieutenant had to gnaw his moustache to keep in the bitter words. All this scolding after they had taken so much trouble with their horses! If the Herr Baron were to speak to his groom in that way I would have to keep out of his reach, for I suppose he would take out his spite on me. The whole thing to-day was only sham, yet it cost one man's life, and that of two horses; what must a real battle be!"

The regiment returned to their quarters, horsemen and riders covered with dust. The trumpets clanged merrily, but many of the cavalrymen were anything but merry. The Major was so much out of humor that he would not converse with any one, and all the officers at the castle seemed so out of sorts that the dinner was not at all a cheerful meal; Lieutenant von

Schönfeld leaving the table the moment he had finished, and remaining in his room most of the day.

Tobias left the castle and went to the parsonage, hoping to see a more cheerful state of affairs, but found it even less so, the maid who cooked for the cavalrymen being incensed at their complaints of her skill. She had repeated their sayings to Frau Seeback, who devoutly wished their time was up, that the parsonage might return to its normal peaceful condition. The whole company was more or less ruffled in temper, and the innocent horses had to bear the brunt of their displeasure. Tobias had seen the sunny and shady side of a soldier's life, and returned to the castle, where he was jubilantly welcomed by Otto.

"O Tobias! I am so glad you are come, I want to play soldier and be gay and beautiful like the cavalrymen. I will be an officer, and you my horse. I will ask mamma for her silver spur, and you must have a string in your mouth for a bridle, and I will ride on your back, and when I say chirk! chirk! you must gallop."

Tobias agreed to all this, his mind busy with the thought that even this five-year-old boy was in love with a soldier life, and was acting the part to the best of his ability.

"Now, my good horse, stand still, for if you

move I shall hit you with my sabre, that is the way the soldiers do."

Tobias stood like a statue, and, at command of the young officer, trotted slowly, then faster and faster, then broke into a gallop, kept up until his forehead was damp, and his breath short with the exertion.

"Poor horses!" thought he, "what a sad life you have when you belong to soldiers! Only a few hours' sleep, a piece of hard iron in your mouth, and subject to the ill-temper of tired soldiers. How glad am I that I am a boy, for one even as poor as I is far better off than a horse owned by an emperor."

"Chirk! chirk!" came from Otto, the quickly drawn rein breaking in upon the moralizing of his steed, who sprang away so suddenly that the young officer lost his hold and tumbled off, whereupon his horse assisted him to his feet, and brushed off the dust, while uttering words of condolence.

The Baroness heard the sound of weeping and hurried to see the cause, and Tobias explained.

"We were playing soldier, gracious lady, and I was the horse, he chirruped to me, I sprang away too suddenly, and he fell off. I am sorry, I did not mean to hurt him."

"I am sure of that, Tobias, but even in play

a person may be badly hurt. Think of that poor cavalryman, Rückert, who was thrown from his horse to-day and killed, and the other so badly hurt that he can never again be a soldier, and the horse that had to be killed because of its broken leg; and yet it was only a sham battle."

"Yes, I saw it all," said Tobias, "and will not forget again that we are only playing."

The Baroness returned to her room, satisfied that it would not happen again. Yet she was not in her usual spirits. She longed for the time when the castle would be free of soldiers, and order and quietude take the place of clanking sabres and spurs, the smell of cigars, and the banging of doors. She longed, oh, so earnestly, for the presence of her husband, for she felt the responsibility of entertaining so many officers; but he, too, was a soldier, and duty called and kept him from his loved home.

The next morning Tobias rose early, as was his custom, and went to see Boaz, the old shepherd, who had promised to lend him a trumpet.

All nature was fresh and lovely that beautiful morning, and the boy's heart was light with youthful hope and pleasure as he went through the beech forest on the way to the cottage of Boaz. Every tree, shrub, and flower was noticed by him, for his grandfather had trained

his eyes to see and appreciate the beautiful workmanship of all created things.

Early as it was, Boaz had gone to the field with his flocks, but expecting Tobias he had left the trumpet where he could get it, and seizing the treasure Tobias hurried to the cottage of the farmer Gottlob, his son Gustav having promised to go with him to a quiet and secluded spot, where they could practice their favorite instruments of war.

Gustav was not out of bed, but Tobias was willing to wait the few minutes it required for the simple toilet and ablutions of his compatriot, and but a very short time elapsed until, with trumpet in hand, Gustav joined him; and they returned to the beech forest, where they sat down upon a fallen tree behind the shadow of a great rock. They were scarcely seated when they heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and peeping from behind their shelter they saw that several young officers, whom Tobias recognized as those quartered at the castle, halted close to them. The boys were full of curiosity to know for what purpose, and were not long in doubt, for after a few minutes' conversation one of them commenced stepping off a space in the fragrant turf of the forest, and they saw with beating hearts that they were to witness a duel.

Major von Biskowitz and Lieutenant von Schönfeld were the principals, and had come that lovely, peaceful morning, under the name of honor, to wipe out the insult of the day before by risking their young lives.

Tobias had often heard his grandfather deplore these murders and suicides which flaunted under the name of honor, and was so filled with horror at seeing an example of it so near him that he was speechless, and could only look on in mute helplessness at the terrible, sickening scene.

"The code of honor is so well known to you, Herr Major and Herr Lieutenant, that it is unnecessary to remind you who is entitled to the first shot," said one of the seconds, as he placed pistols in their hands.

A deep silence followed, and the eyes of Tobias were fastened upon the ghastly face of von Schönfeld, who was waiting for the "one! two! three! fire!" and the ball of his antagonist, who, to the horror of Tobias, was taking aim.

Although both were good marksmen, excitement had unsteadied their nerves, and the Major's ball was lost in the air, while that of the Lieutenant grazed the ear of his antagonist, and the boys took a deep breath of satisfaction, for they thought the duel was over. But no;

so-called honor demanded two shots; and when the second called time for another attempt at murder, the hand of the Major had regained its steadiness, a fearful cry filled the silent beech grove, and Lieutenant Schönfeld fell to the ground desperately wounded.

"He challenged me, and it is his own fault if he got the worst of it," remarked Major von Biskowitz, turning away from the terrible sight.

The physician who had accompanied them stepped forward and tried to stay the flow of blood; a litter was provided, and the young officer was placed upon it and carried to the castle.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT IS TRUE HONOR?

"THE Lieutenant von Schönfeld having gone out for a morning ride in the beech forest, his horse fell and threw him, and in rising stepped upon him," was the report which went to the commander of the regiment, and was given to the Baroness, who was filled with anxiety and sorrow over the accident.

"It is not true," said Tobias to Peter, the coachman, "I saw the Major shoot the Lieutenant in the breast with his pistol."

"We all know that as well as you do; Jacob told us," replied Peter, "and the Colonel knows it too, but it is his policy not to let people suspect that he has knowledge of it, or they would all be court-martialed."

"Then the commanders don't allow it?" commented Tobias.

"No, they pretend not, but I often hear of duels among the hot-blooded young officers."

A crime that was forbidden and yet allowed, was a mystery to Tobias, and, as was his custom, he went to Pastor Seeback for information.

"Yes," said the pastor, "with officers of that style a duel is not only considered commendable, but a necessity, when they imagine their honor assailed, although it is strictly forbidden. No wonder you are shocked, Tobias, dueling may be the code of officers, but it is not that of Christians. Our Lord and Saviour said: 'Love your enemies, do good to them who despitefully use you,' and he also says, 'if a man smite you on the right cheek turn to him the left,' and 'it is better to suffer injustice than to act unjustly.' We should follow in Christ's footsteps, but these men say by their actions, 'as you do to me, so will I do to you.' War in any form is a terrible evil. Thousands are murdered, for we cannot call it by any other name, whole villages are burned to the ground, expensive and useful bridges destroyed, and cruel loss and havoc follow wherever it goes. But a duel is the most bloodthirsty and cruel of all, for it, there is never any excuse, and there is no good to be gained from it in any way. Lieutenant von Schönfeld considered that his superior officer had insulted him in the presence of his men and others, and what has he gained? Nothing, and may lose his life. Oh, my boy, it is far better to suffer injustice than to inflict it, and if he had killed Major von Biskowitz for a few hasty words, his life would have been one

of remorse, as no doubt that of the Major will be, although he carried a high head in the affair."

The sham battle of the day before, and the wounding of Lieutenant von Schönfeld was the subject of neighborhood talk, and while the servants at the castle were taking their breakfast, Jacob, the servant of Lieutenant von Schönfeld, came to the kitchen for warm water and linen cloths.

"How is your Herr master?" questioned Peter, "will he get well?"

Jacob looked very sad, and finding that the servants knew it to be the result of a duel, and not an accident, gave what information he could.

"They are searching for the ball, and it causes the loss of much blood," said he. "I don't see how he can live, and I don't know how his mother and father can bear the news of his death, for he is their only child, and they almost worship him."

"What made him so silly as to fight the Major?" questioned Peter. "Words don't kill; and if anybody speaks crossly to me, I just say to myself, 'Keep your mouth shut, Peter, and move off.' I let all rough speeches roll off like water off a duck's back; so nobody is hurt."

"Yes, that will do for common people like

us," responded Jacob, "but young officers must attend to points of honor. Three weeks ago, when my young master took leave of his home, his father said: 'Remember, my son, first comes honor; then God; then the emperor; then your parents. Honor lost, all is lost; and I would rather see you in your grave than to hear that you had turned your back upon honor."

"What is honor?" questioned old Bertha, the cook. "I cannot make out exactly what it is."

"Honor," responded Jacob, reflectively and pompously, "honor is when a man makes other men afraid of him."

"Then rats must have plenty of it, for I am afraid of them," grumbled Bertha.

"I don't like anybody to make light of such a serious subject," remarked Jacob, with dignity.

"Our old Herr Baron thought that our young Baron Carl had injured his honor by marrying a bürger's daughter; can you explain that, Jacob?" questioned Peter.

"Honor among the nobility is a curious thing, and cannot be easily explained," replied Jacob.

"I will read you something about honor that the Herr Pastor wrote for me," said Tobias,

eagerly, taking a folded paper from his pocket. "He said that a brother clergyman, who was a very learned and good man, wrote it; and our dear Herr Pastor has read it so many times that he can say it without looking at the paper. He said that I was to commit it to memory, so that I could tell it to others."

"Well, go ahead," said Jacob, "although I am not much for reading."

"Nor I," said Peter, "but women are always wanting to hear new things, so you can read it for them." So Tobias read:

"'What is true honor? Is it not to bow
Submissively to him who rightly sits
In heaven enthroned through an eternal *Now*,
The great, supreme Creator? What else befits
So well poor, sinful man, whose being flits
Away like vapor from the marshy plain,
Seeming secure, but gentle zephyr smites
It easily to nothingness again,
Nor vestige leaves of its illusive train.
Submitting truly to *his* righteous sway,
We rise exalted as we lowly bend
In dust; and in the new and living way,
Which our dear Saviour, the poor sinner's friend,
Hath opened, we approach his throne, and blend
Our prayers, and tears repentant, homage pure,
To God. 'Tis then, and only then, we trend,
From earth, and sin's disgrace, our way secure
To honor stainless, that shall e'er endure.
But, oh! how many they who will not seek
This humble, pure nobility of soul;

And deem their fellows cowardly and weak,
Who faithfully their littleness control,
And look o'er time to that immortal goal
Where honor false shall quick be disarrayed,
And honor true receive its rightful dole,
A crown! That crown, oh, comrade, will not fade.
To gain it *strive;* may it thy brow enshade!' "

"Yes," remarked Jacob, when he had finished, "that sounds very good, and I suppose it is, but it would not do for our young officers at all. If there were no fear of duels, the superior officers would tyrannize until life would be a burden, for the inferiors cannot resent it in any other way that I know of. Yes, yes, the fear of a challenge keeps them respectful. If my poor Herr Lieutenant had been willing to put up with the insulting words of the Major, all his brother officers would have despised him. Yes, he would have been ashamed to meet the eyes of his comrades. Now that he has met the Major and exchanged shots with him, they will have respect for him."

"What use will that be if he is in his coffin?" inquired Peter.

"What use? Why much. People can die but once, and a soldier's life is never secure; just think of cavalryman Rückert yesterday."

"When is he to be buried?"

"This evening, and to-morrow bright and

early the regiment moves, but my poor Lieutenant will remain."

"Had Rückert any people, Jacob?" inquired Bertha.

"Yes, the Colonel sent them word of the accident, but they don't come."

The words had scarcely been uttered when there came a timid knock at the kitchen door, and Peter hastened to open it.

There stood a feeble-looking little woman dressed in mourning, and with her a half-grown girl. Both seemed scarcely able to stand from weariness, and their eyes were dim with tears.

"Where is the body of my son, my Heinrich?" said the elder woman, oh! tell me that I am not too late! I am his mother and this is his only sister, Sophie. We have walked a long way, but if we only see my boy ——."

Tears stopped her utterance, and the servants looked upon her with deep sympathy, but none but Tobias thought of bringing chairs for them.

"His death was so sudden, little mother, that I doubt if he suffered pain," said Jacob. "We must all die, and we don't know how soon, and it was much easier than to have been wounded in battle, and perhaps live a long time a miserable cripple."

The mother looked at him as though unable to comprehend his words.

"He was my only son, my support, for I am a widow," said she, with pale lips.

"Exactly, so is my master an only son," answered Jacob, "and oh, misery! I had forgotten that I came for warm water and bandages; here, you people, give me the things, why dont you hurry? dear, dear! to think I should forget in such a time!"

He hurried away, and the others turned to Frau Rückert.

"Have some coffee and semmels, little mother," said Bertha, "come to the table and eat, it will rest you."

"But first tell me of my son, and that I am not too late."

"No, you are not too late," said Tobias, with tears of sympathy in his eyes. "He is at Herr Schindler's, where he was quartered. I will take you there, if you are not too tired."

"Oh, tired indeed are we, for we have walked eight hours, but we would walk double the distance to see my poor boy."

"But eat something, mother, before you go." said Peter.

"Oh, I could not swallow it. If Sophie can eat, I will wait for her."

But the sister also declined, and both arose and followed Tobias. It was quite a distance, and the boy beguiled the time by telling them

of the duel, of the parting words of Lieutenant von Schonfeld's father, and of his terrible wounding.

"Oh! how could any father give such advice to his son?" exclaimed Frau Rückert, in shocked surprise. "And to put honor before his Maker! Poor boy! poor boy! he felt compelled to stand up and be shot for what he considered honor. Oh! had he no good Christian mother to counteract that godless advice?"

"Jacob did not say that she did," replied Tobias. "But we have reached Schindler's, and your son is in that room where the blind is down."

The mother turned very pale, and leaned against the door-frame for support; but, quickly recovering, she took the arm of her daughter, and followed Tobias into the room. There lay young Rückert in his cavalry uniform, his face peaceful in the repose of death, and in his hands a bunch of wild flowers, placed there by a comrade in arms.

Speechless and tearless, the mother gazed for a moment, and then came a low cry: "Heinrich, my son, my son!" and she sank, almost fainting, upon the chair which Tobias had placed for her.

Tears of sympathy flowed from the eyes

of Tobias. He had never before seen such grief.

"A better son no mother ever had," said the poor woman, after a long pause, and rocking herself slowly to and fro. "He had only one year more to serve; then he was to have come home, and was to have married our good neighbor's daughter, Lotta; and her father was to have given her a piece of land, three cows, and five hundred dollars. And my boy was not willing that Sophie should go out to service, but said that he would give her the amount she would earn, so that she might stay with me while he was away. He was always so thoughtful and kind."

All this went to the heart of Tobias, and he called to mind how entirely alone was he in the world, with no mother to weep for him were he lying in the place of Heinrich.

"Oh! I am glad," thought he, "that my mother is safe in heaven, where there are no tears shed, though it is lonely for me upon earth, with no father, mother, sister, or brother. But I am glad that there will be no one to grieve for me as this poor mother is grieving for her son."

After a time they heard a great trampling of horses' hoofs outside, and Tobias knew that the cavalrymen were returning from the training-field. Frau Rückert knew it, too, and tears

rained from her eyes at the thought that at the last training her boy was alive and well, and that he was now deaf to her words of love.

It had been arranged that the funeral was to be late in the afternoon, and Herr Schindler and his wife showed every kindness to the poor mother and sister in the interval, and seeing them in such good hands, Tobias ran across the fields to the castle, resolving to return to the funeral.

The servants listened eagerly to all he had to tell, and when he went back to Schindler's he was the bearer of a message from the Baroness, that Frau Rückert was welcome to return to the castle when the funeral was over, and remain as long as she felt contented to stay.

To the surprise of the villagers the Colonel came to the funeral, and all his officers followed his example. Nearly all the regiment followed the simple casket, and the whole village turned out to see a soldier's funeral. Half-holiday was given the school-children, and all took flowers to lay upon the grave. Next to the coffin walked the two mourners, and with the pastor was Tobias, for the mother wished it, and the boy was glad that it was a comfort to her to see him there, and the words of Herr Seeback touched the hearts of many of the dead cavalryman's comrades.

Then Tobias took the mother and sister to the castle, where a good room was given them, to which they retired after their light supper, and where they slept the sleep of exhaustion.

Early the next morning the regiment left Raundorf, and no one was sorry to part from them.

All had left the castle except Herr Lieutenant Schönberg and his servant, Jacob, the poor young officer being too badly wounded to move in his bed, and to the great satisfaction of the Baroness, Frau Rückert, who was an experienced nurse, was very willing to stay and take care of him, and Sophie made herself useful in many ways.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ATTACK BY FREEBOOTERS.

A FEW weeks passed, and the whole country was agitated by the cry of "War! War!" which, like the death of the first-born in Egypt, brought sorrow to every household in Raundorf.

"Oh, my husband," cried the Baroness von Raundorf, weepingly, "why not ask for your discharge from the army? There are plenty to go without your risking your life; you can easily procure a discharge."

"I know it, my Amalie, but think how cowardly it would be to ask for it when my country needs my services! I would not be worthy the name of nobleman, much less of soldier and officer in the emperor's service. The Fatherland calls upon all her sons, and we must obey."

Rachel wept for her children and would not be comforted because they were not, and throughout the Fatherland mothers were weeping because of the danger to which their loved ones would be exposed, children weeping for their fathers, and wives for their husbands. From every city, town, village, hamlet and farm-

house, came response to the call "to arms!" the farmer going from his fields, the merchant from his desk, the pastor from his pulpit, teachers from their pupils, work of all kinds left unfinished, the hands employed upon it having taken up sabre and musket.

There was another great question to be considered which the war entailed, and that was provisions for such a great number; and for this object contributions were levied, all doing their share according to their ability, and that of Baron von Raundorf was a generous one, cattle, sheep, and other animals for food, beside all kinds of grains and vegetables.

Before the militia left Raundorf, they, headed by the Baron, went to the church, where there was service especially for them. The good pastor prayed for their safe return, and blessed them. Sadness was upon every face; women wept, and the solemn tones of the organ touched many hearts. "With God, for the emperor and our Fatherland!" Herr Seeback had said, and his discourse inspired them to battle for the right. He bade them to keep God ever before their eyes, and love for him in their hearts. Then the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, and they marched away, and the pastor returned to the parsonage.

It had devolved upon Tobias, after the death

of his grandfather, to have charge of the key of the church, and that day he resolved to ask some questions of the pastor when he took the key to him.

"Dear Herr Pastor, what is the use of war?" questioned he, "and who invented it?"

"War, my boy," replied the pastor, "is an institution of Satan, designed for the bodily and spiritual destruction of man. War is the last resort of those who are striving for power; and bloody wars are fought for territory which by right belongs to others. Such was the case with the wars of Napoleon, which, for twenty years, devastated Europe. But there are such things as just wars, and that is when a country must protect itself against an enemy, as in the case of Germany against France in 1813, when we all took up arms in defence of our Fatherland, our wives, our children, and our homes. But I cannot look upon the present war in that light, it appears to be more for the sake of a covetous longing for more territory and a desire for glory. I think the councilors of the emperor much to blame in influencing him to declare war. To stir up quarreling and strife is no great achievement, any simple-minded school-boy can do that, but to establish peace and keep peace is a noble virtue worthy of heroes and rulers. May God in his mercy

bring the war to a close speedily, and for that we must pray."

All his life Tobias had heard of war, but until now had never been brought in such close contact with it. The once peaceful village, busy with its daily work of living, was now idle; the men who were at home gathered in groups discussing the situation, and those who once spent their evenings at home gathered in saloons and other public places to hear the news and to read the papers.

At the same time there was much anxiety at the castle to hear the news, the Baroness watching for letters from her husband, and reading with beating heart the list of killed and wounded after each battle.

"My dear Tobias," said she, one morning, "you can do me a great service if you will, and that is, to go to Berlin and ask for the letters and papers for me. The messenger brought nothing this morning, but I am sure a later mail has something for me; I am terribly anxious about the Herr Baron."

The heart of Tobias thrilled with joy at this request, he was glad to oblige the Baroness, and delighted at the thought of seeing Berlin, for he had never been to the capital, and quickly made up his mind to invite Gustav to

accompany him, quite sure his father would be willing to have him go.

He was not mistaken in this, Gottlob was as anxious as any one to hear the latest news, and Gustav was delighted at the thought, so they set out in fine spirits upon their eight-mile walk.

They found Berlin in a state of great excitement, every face wearing a look of anxiety. Men were gathered at every street corner, and others were on church towers and other high places watching with field-glasses in hand.

"If you lie down and put your ear to the earth you can hear the booming of cannon," the boys heard a man say; "'it must be a terrible battle; may God give our troops the victory, or the enemy will be on us by to-morrow morning."

The boys listened to this and many other bits of news, then getting a letter for the Baroness and some newspapers they started for home; their talk naturally being upon the subject uppermost in all minds.

"I cannot help wishing that, if there must be a battle, we were near enough te see it," remarked Gustav. "We boys have often played war, and speared each other with corn-stalks and bombarded with clods of earth, but I have

never seen cannon fired and limbs shot off; that is real war."

"But I hope we will never see that; just think of the people who have sons and husbands in the army! And there is a great battle going on now, and the poor Frau Baroness, who is nearly sick from anxiety and cannot sleep, will feel far worse when she hears of it."

"Don't you hear somebody coming, Tobias? I do, just listen."

"Let us put our ears to the ground, there is no one about to see and laugh at us."

The boys laid themselves flat upon the earth and listened. It was near a strip of woodland, bushes near at hand, and tall trees in the background.

"Don't you hear the thunder of cannon, Tobias?"

"Yes, but that sounds far off; near at hand I hear the people walking; look, Gustav, there come two soldiers."

"The boys sprang to their feet, Gustav running into the woods."

"Halt, you rascal!" shouted the man, but Gustav did not obey; instead, he ran the faster.

"Have you seen any soldiers about here?" questioned they of Tobias.

"No, but a battle is going on, we were listening to the booming of cannon."

"What have you in your pocket?" was the next question, "unload, we will take care of all you have."

Tobias refused to comply, whereupon one of them held his arms fast to his side while the other rifled his pockets. In one was found crumbs of bread and scraps of cheese, and in the other the letter for the Baroness; the newspapers which he carried under his arm they had already scattered to the winds.

The boy looked on in dumb dismay while they broke the seal and unfolded the letter; but, though speaking German, they could not read it, therefore could not understand its contents.

"Here, boy, read this, we want to know what it says," said one of them.

"But it is not right to read other people's letters unless thy give us permission," objected Tobias.

"All is fair in love and war, boy, have you never heard that?"

Had Tobias not been trained to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to look upon deception in the light of falsehood, he would have used the soldier's argument and considered all fair in war by changing the words of the letter as he read. But that never occurred to him, and he was too much in their

power to refuse to read, so commenced, but in a very low tone.

"Louder, boy, louder, if you don't want a cut from my sabre."

"My beloved wife, Amalie," read Tobias, "I have only time for a few words, but I know that to tell you I am well is the best news I can send. I am full of anxiety for you and the children. If you hear of the enemy coming in that direction, secret yourselves in the wing of the castle in which are the apartments occupied by von Seerhausen, and be ready at any moment to descend through the secret door to the vaults below, where I secreted the family plate, jewels, and other valuables. I implore you not to let one night pass without having two trusty men from the village to guard the castle and give you warning of any attack. May God take you and our children in his mighty keeping. Farewell my beloved, my wife.

"Your Raundorf."

Great terror seized Tobias before he was half through the letter, he stopped and looked with imploring eyes at his captors, but hands were instantly placed upon sabres, and threatening looks told him to proceed. He bitterly regretted that he had not refused to read it, for he scarcely believed them wicked enough to

kill a defenceless boy; but the deed was done, and no power on earth could recall the words which both had heard. He now realized by their glances at each other and nods of satisfaction, that they were enemies, and the last people who should have heard the contents of the letter. His heart was filled with anguish that he had, though innocently, betrayed his benefactors, and was tortured with dread of the result. He put the letter back in his pocket, and was about to continue his journey when his way was obstructed.

"Oh, no, my pretty boy, you are too useful to let go so quickly, come with us," and they led their captive to the bushes, where were secreted a number of armed men to whom Tobias was compelled to read the letter, while comparing himself to Judas Iscariot who had betrayed his Master into the hands of the enemy. They all listened with interest, and for the rest of the day kept their eyes upon him, threatening him with instant death if he tried to escape.

In the anguish of his heart Tobias instead of looking to God for help, put his dependence upon Gustav, hoping that he would reach the village and warn the people of the approach of the enemy. He grieved that Gustav had not heard the contents of the letter, that he might

warn the Baroness, and, added to that was the fear that Gustav did not know they were enemies, although he had run so fast that the soldier who had chased him saw it was impossible to overtake him.

At length night came, and as soon as the men dropped asleep Tobias besought the leader, with tears and prayers, not to molest the castle, which he had so unwittingly betrayed. But he was commanded to silence, and at midnight, when they set out on their march, they placed him in front to lead the way.

"Oh! if I could but lead them from Raundorf, and instead guide them to the swamp of Gumpersdorf," thought he, "it would not hurt them, only keep them prisoners until morning, and I could run and give the Raundorf people the alarm."

But there was no chance to do this Some of them knew in what direction the village lay, and they watched him constantly, and it seemed to him but a very short time until the village lay before him. He knew every tree and shrub, saw the steeple of the church pointing to the silent stars, and longed as he had never done before for his grandfather, who lay peacefully sleeping in the church-yard. He was almost ill from his agony of self-condemnation; and when the castle came into view, and he saw the

solitary light burning in the sleeping-room of the Baroness, he longed to cry out to her of the danger approaching. He knew that she was watching for him and for the letter, and that, instead of the words of love from her husband being the comfort and assistance to her which they were intended to be, they had, by his agency, proved a snare; but he knew that his voice could not reach her, and that any effort to give her warning would cost him his life.

"Now, boy, we will visit the castle first, then the village; and we want you to show us the way to the secret steps mentioned in the letter. We also wish to know how many entrances there are to the castle, and how many people are in it."

Tobias was compelled, at the point of the bayonet, to answer these questions, and to answer quickly, for the least hesitation was followed by blows and pushes that nearly knocked him off his feet.

In a few minutes they were in front of the castle, and several sentinels were detailed to guard against surprises, while the others entered. They pried open the gate of the court-yard, then the entrance to the castle, and were masters of the situation. The frightened servants, half clothed, gathered about the Baroness, who had her children clinging to her, scream-

ing with fright. Her chief fear was that Lila would have another attack of illness like that following the terror occasioned by the mask worn by von Seerhausen.

"Take all, everything you can find," said she, giving the keys into their hands, "but go away quickly, that my little ones may not die of terror." And poor Tobias, standing among the men, felt such remorse as he prayed that he might never feel again.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ALARM BELL

THE freebooters were not long in telling the Baroness that there were other treasures in the castle than those which the keys would unlock, and in proof of it they told her the contents of her husband's letter.

In the meantime they had sent one of the servants of the castle to the village to tell the inhabitants that, if they would raise the sum of fifteen hundred dollars, their property should be spared; if not, the whole place would be rifled, and then set on fire.

Tumult reigned in and about the castle. The soldiers threw themselves upon the handsome sofas and chairs, their dusty clothing and hob-nailed shoes making sad havoc of the richly-embroidered coverings. They ordered a meal to be served for them of the best that the larder contained, and what they did not eat they threw over the richly-carpeted floors. They ran their sabres through feather beds and cushions to see whether any treasures were concealed in them, and they broke handsome mirrors from pure love of destruction. The

castle resounded with singing, shouting, and whistling; and while the leader was lolling in a handsome reception chair, he was informed that a delegation of citizens was coming.

"Ha! they had better come," said he. "I was intending to wait half an hour longer, and, if the fifteen hundred dollars was not forthcoming, they would have seen a red hen on their roofs. Welcome, good friends," he continued, turning to the citizens. "I hope that you have agreed to our demands, for your own sakes as well as ours."

"Herr Officer," said the mild voice of Pastor Seeback, "I beg of you, in the name of manhood and religion, to believe me when I say that in the whole village it is impossible to raise the sum that you demand. You know as well as I that in war times no one has much money by him; and there are no wealthy people in Raundorf. I have brought eight hundred and sixty-four dollars, and many of us have given all that we had. I hope that you will call to mind your mothers, your wives, and your children, and will leave this home, where you are causing terror to the lady and her children. To protect helpless women and little ones is always the duty of strong men, particularly of soldiers."

"Oh, save your words, Herr Black-coat; we

did not come here to listen to preaching; we came to plunder. Give out the money that you have brought, and go back for the balance, or it will go hard with your village. Now be off."

"I wish to remind you, Herr Officer, that the day has gone past when we can be attacked in our homes by barbarians," said the pastor, fearlessly. "I also wish to say that, if you carry out your threat, the report of such an outrage will not only ring through Germany, but throughout the whole of Europe; and that, to repel such atrocities, the citizens are perfectly justifiable in taking up arms to exterminate you; and with that necessity we exterminate all hope of doing away with our immense standing army that——"

"Be silent!" roared the freebooter, "if you have any regard for your life," and he seized his pistol from the table before him. "The Herr Black-coat should remember that it is to protect him and his peaceful citizens that soldiers voluntarily risk their lives, and eat black break, and drink water out of a field flask, while he and his peaceful citizens sit at home, count their dollars, eat of the best, and smoke their pipes. It is one of the rights of war to destroy all we can in an enemy's country, and we are taking advantage of the right. Your Herr Baron is an officer, and no doubt is doing,

in what he considers the enemy's country, just what we are doing here. Here, you people! Go tell your lady I wish to see her again; if she will pay the balance of the fifteen hundred dollars we will go; if not, we will fire the place."

Old Peter went to summon his mistress, and she came looking very pale and anxious, her children clinging to her dress. But before the leader had time to speak, a tall, pale figure with an officer's cloak thrown about him appeared in the open door of an adjoining apartment, who would have reminded Tobias, had he been there to see it, of Herr von Seerhausen when dressed as a spectre.

"Your name, comrade," said Lieutenant von Schönfeld, for it was he who had arisen from his sick-bed in order to be what help he could to the Baroness and the others; "are you an officer, or merely leader to a band of robbers?"

"How dare you say that to me? Do you know that weaker words than those have cost life?"

"If you act the part of robbers you should not be ashamed of the name," replied the Lieutenant, calmly, eyeing the pistol which the other had grasped.

"Who is it that dares to speak to me in that manner?"

"My name is Benno von Schönfeld."

With an exclamation of joy the leader sprang to his feet, and throwing his arm about von Schönfeld led him to a seat.

"Benno, don't you know von Sichenan, your old cadet-comrade, who was heart and soul your friend?"

"We were friends; but ask yourself, can we be so longer, you an enemy of our Fatherland?"

"Now, Schönfeld, don't condemn me unheard. You know I was always a wild boy, but not a wicked one, and you also know that I went into the regiment with Harold, the son of our colonel, because he was a dear friend of mine in the military school. But his father was so severe with me that I asked for my discharge, and joined the king's troops. At the breaking out of the present war the Baron von Lückburg raised a corps of volunteers, and I became its captain; while in the emperor's service I was only lieutenant."

"But you are fighting against your Fatherland, and against your brother, Arthur, who is in my regiment," answered von Schönfeld.

"Yes, but when I joined the king's troops the monarchs were friendly. That they are now enemies is no more my fault than it is Arthur's. Should I meet him in battle I should forget my

duty as a soldier, and be the loving brother that I have always been to him."

"You and your men have brought destruction into this beautiful home," said von Schönfeld, looking about him, "have frightened a noble lady and her children, have brought me out of my sick-bed, and insulted the pastor, who has been the best friend in the world to me, for he has brought me to my Saviour; you have plundered and ——"

"Hush, hush, Benno," interrupted the leader, "you must remember that my boys are all volunteers in my service and would go through fire and water for me. They are brave boys, afraid of nothing; we have made a mistake, that is all, and are willing to do what we can to rectify it. But I cannot deprive them entirely of the rich booty which I have promised them, but all that is in my power to do I will do. Ho, Lehmann! Call our people, and tell them to gather here, I wish to speak to them."

They came from every part of the castle where they had been ransacking for treasures, their sabres clattering as they ran, and touching their caps to the lady and to their captain, waited for him to speak.

"Boys, I am sorry to say that by our intrusion here we have frightened a gentle lady and her children, and brought my dear old friend,

Lieutenant von Schönfeld, from his sick-bed, to the endangering of his life. I feel deeply sorry for this, as no doubt you do also, and I know that you will do what you can to help me make amends. I know that it would not be keeping my word with you not to allow you any returns from this expedition, but I think you will agree with me that under the circumstances we should be satisfied with less than what we intended to take. Therefore I propose that the eight hundred and sixty-four dollars be divided among you equally, I giving up all share in it; and that we only keep the money that has been found in the castle, in which I shall also receive no share; the plate, jewels, and other valuables to be restored to their places. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, yes," shouted the men, tossing up their caps, "hurrah for our brave captain, hurrah! hurrah!"

"Are you satisfied with me now, von Schönfeld?" inquired the leader, taking the hand of the lieutenant, "have I not done the best I could under the circumstances, will you not be friends with me again?"

"Nothing but your promise to give up this terrible life of robbery can ever reconcile me to calling you friend, and ——"

Lieutenant von Schönfeld was interrupted by

the sharp clanging of the alarm bell in the village, and captain and men sprang to their feet.

"Ha! we are betrayed! Who did it? If we find him we will make him suffer for it!" and all rushed pell-mell out of the castle.

"Who is ringing the bell?" questioned the pastor of Peter, as he passed out of the castle on his way home.

"Tobias," was the reply.

Clear and loud it clanged, Tobias and Gustav ringing turn about with as much vigor as if they expected to be well paid for it, for Tobias had left the castle in the midst of the tumult, had run through the beech forest and the meadow, and found Gustav leaning idly against the door-frame of his father's cottage.

"Why didn't you run and tell the villagers and the Frau Baroness that the robbers were coming?" exclaimed he, indignantly, "then they would have found only four bare walls in every room they entered, and the kind Frau Baroness would have been saved a terrible fright.'

"How did I know they were enemies?" questioned Gustav, "for I did not hang back as you did, but took to my heels and ran. I did fly to the castle and tell the Frau Baroness what had happened to us, but she did not be-

lieve they were enemies, but only soldiers who had lost their way and were inquiring of you what direction to take in order to rejoin their comrades. But father said they might be enemies, and he would be on the safe side, so we buried all we had that was of any value, and drove our cattle down into the woods."

"But you might have told the villagers and put them on their guard."

"I hadn't time. It was as much as I could do to think of myself. Father says in time of war it is every man's duty to look out for number one."

"Let us run to the tower and ring the alarm bell," Tobias had said, and, although their ringing was like locking a stable after the horse was stolen, it served the purpose of hurrying the exit of the marauders.

CHAPTER XVI.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

IT was some time before the castle could recover its serenity after the departure of the soldiers; and the Baroness feared that it could never appear the same, so complete was the destruction of things she valued as keepsakes and remembrancers of departed friends.

But she had one great subject of congratulation, that no evil consequences had followed for her children; and she was deeply grateful that Lieutenant von Schönfeld's presence prevented greater loss, feeling that she had been richly rewarded for having him faithfully nursed during his illness.

"He was, under God, your deliverer," the Herr Pastor had said, when calling to see von Schönfeld the next day, "for I must believe that had it not been for him the castle would have been in ashes."

Poor Tobias, who was sitting by, felt this keenly; for he was conscious that the robbers would never have known of the castle had he not read the letter to them. What must the Baroness, what must Pastor Seeback, think of

him? Dare he hope that the Baron would let him remain in the castle when he heard of it?

A new pang had gone to his heart when he heard the Baroness tell Frau Rückert that not a dollar was left; and his joy was greater than hers when Sophie Rückert came in with a small package in her hand and gave it into the care of the Baroness, who, upon opening it, found it to be the money for which she had just been grieving.

Sophie had kept her presence of mind when all was tumult and confusion; and when the alarm bell rang, and all were rushing from the castle, the soldier who had the package of money dropped it, and Sophie promptly seized it and threw it into a closet, where she had just searched for it, never supposing it to be the money.

"Another one whom you have helped, and who in turn has helped you," said Pastor Seeback, when she told him the circumstances. "You cast your bread upon the waters, and it is returning to you. Tobias must also rejoice that he rang the alarm bell, for if he had not the robbers would not have dropped their ill-gotten gains."

Tobias said nothing, but tears ran down his flushed cheeks.

"My boy, you must tell us the trouble," said

the pastor, "it is natural that you should be excited and nervous, we are all more or less so, but it does not seem like you to be so cast down and discouraged, what is it that distresses you?"

"I have cause to be miserable," replied Tobias, "if it had not been for me all this would never have happened. I am like Judas Iscariot, for I have betrayed my kind Frau Baroness into the hands of the enemy, and she has always been so good to me."

"Did you do it intentionally?" inquired the pastor.

"Oh, no, but I might have refused to read the letter, even if they did threaten to kill me," and he told the whole story to the astonished listeners.

"Now, Tobias," said the Baroness, "don't grieve another moment about it. If my husband is spared, and my Lila does not fall ill, I shall have nothing more to ask. Treasures of gold and silver are nothing in comparison to the lives and health of our dear ones, and I have every hope that both have so far escaped."

"Then you forgive me, dear Frau Baroness?"

"I have nothing to forgive; you were in the robbers' power, there was nothing left for you to do but to obey their commands."

"You have seen but a fragment of war, how do you like it, Tobias?" questioned Pastor Seeback.

"I don't like it at all, it don't seem to me that we can ever get right again."

"No, war is the development of all the evil in human nature. It makes murderers, robbers, and deceivers. German fighting against German, brother against brother, son against father, and father against son. Do you long to be a soldier, Tobias?"

"No, no, I have seen enough of war, and would not care if all the soldiers were in the bottom of the sea."

But that is not only very unjust, but very unchristianlike, for as a rule, in the Fatherland, only the officers are voluntary soldiers; and many of them rue, in time of peace, what they thought justifiable in time of war. Not to the soldiers must the blame be given, but to the causes which make them so."

Willing as were the pastor and Baroness to remove the blame from Tobias, he found the villagers anything but lenient toward him. They were incensed that through him they had lost their money, and the cry of traitor filled the air when he appeared among them. So disturbed was he at the change that he never went to the village if he could help it, but re-

mained at the castle amusing the children and doing all he could to help any one who needed his assistance.

In the meantime war was raging, and the Raundorf people were harassed with anxiety, and the quartering of soldiers, and there was no quietude to be found anywhere, the whole neighborhood being in turmoil. This was increased by the marching through the village of a large number of the enemy as prisoners of war, who, weaponless, footsore and weary, were surrounded by their captors.

From dwellings, barns, gardens, and fields ran old and young to see the prisoners; and, to prove the change which war makes upon peaceful natures, the citizens taunted, threatened, scoffed at, and mocked the miserable captives, pelted them with clods, and refused their request for water to quench their thirst.

In vain Pastor Seeback besought them to desist from this inhuman conduct, and reminded them that the prisoners were fellow-creatures whom the chances of war had placed at their mercy; and that it was possible that the tide might turn, and that the village might fall into the hands of the enemy, in which case they could expect no favors.

Schoolmaster Siebert also plead to deaf ears, his pupils believing that in time of war they

could do as they pleased. Even Gustav taxed his ingenuity to harass the prisoners, and he snatched a piece of wood from a lame soldier, who was using it as a staff.

"Oh, shame!" cried Tobias, who had been a witness of the act. "I would not have believed such a thing of you, Gustav; I will not go with you any more."

"Neither will I go with you, you Judas, you traitor!" retorted Gustav, defiantly.

Tobias, nothing daunted, flew to the assistance of the crippled soldier, picked up the stick, and put it into his hand; and to the request for water, he ran to the village pump, and soon returned with a full pitcher of pure, cold water.

"Thank you, thank you, my boy! May you never want for a drink and be unable to get it!" said the man, after quenching his thirst and passing along the pitcher to other eager hands.

The heart of Tobias thrilled with sorrow that any one should suffer from thirst where water was so plentiful, and he carried pitcherful after pitcherful, until the procession was nearer to the castle than to the village; then he ran on ahead and told the Baroness of their hunger and thirst, and she gave orders that all the provisions that could be supplied in the castle

should be taken out to them, Tobias being her almoner.

They had scarcely eaten and departed, calling down blessings upon her and Tobias, when some of the villagers gathered in the court-yard of the castle, and loudly denounced the action of the Baroness in thus befriending the enemies of her country. "If the Frau Baroness had more provisions than she knew what to do with, let her distribute them to the people whom the treachery of Tobias had robbed," they said, "and not to those who came to destroy us." But the Baroness made no reply; she had only done her duty, and her conscience was void of offence.

It was not long before the warnings of Pastor Seeback and the schoolmaster were brought to the memory of the citizens, for their village was in the possession of the enemy, and hearts beat anxiously at the remembrance of the treatment of the prisoners. But two weeks passed, and no revenge had been taken for the indignities heaped upon them, when one day a company of the enemy's troops rode through the village, and the villagers looked into each others faces in dismay. But the cavalrymen did not seem to pay any attention to their excitement, but laid siege to all the provisions found in cellars and pantries, killed cattle, sheep and poultry,

making themselves very much at home. As they provided for themselves, so did they for their horses, and the best the neighborhood afforded, in the way of grain and other feed, was taken without asking leave or giving a word of thanks.

"Oh, my good dragoon," said the father of Gustav, as he saw his two fine cows about to be driven off, "spare them to me, for they are all I have for the support of my wife and children. If you would go to the castle you would find far finer ones. The Frau Baroness has forty-four cows in fine condition, and would not miss all of them as I would my two, for she is rich."

"Don't excite yourself, friend," replied the soldier, coolly, "a bird in the hand is worth two on the roof. Why need we trouble ourselves to go to the castle when you have what suits us?"

"You need not go so far," said Gottlob, "the Herr Pastor has two fine cows grazing in the Baron's meadows; he is far abler to lose them than I am; pray leave mine and take his."

"Very good and unselfish in you, my friend," replied the dragoon, ironically, "but your cattle suit us exactly, so why put yourself to any trouble to recommend others?" and away they rode, driving Gottlob's two cows,

which action they kindly informed him was called foraging.

The enemy remained for some time in the neighborhood, and the people were deprived of all their stock, provisions and fuel, and starvation stared them in the face. They were so despairing that they no longer appeared like themselves; the minister preached to almost empty benches, the scholars never went near the school, but roamed idly about the enemy's camp, listening to the singing of songs and telling of stories by the soldiers; the once peaceful place was completely demoralized.

At length, when no more provisions were to be had, they commenced persecuting the villagers to make them give up the money they had secreted. In their despair, the Raundorf people called upon a neighboring village to come and attack the enemy, they did so, and several of the cavalrymen were killed and wounded. But the victory was of short duration, for a larger company of the enemy came and made an attack upon the aggressive village and burned it to the ground.

The village of Raundorf would have shared the same fate had it not been for the pleadings of Pastor Seeback and the schoolmaster; it was spared, and a short time after the cavalry-

men were withdrawn, leaving truly a desert waste behind them.

The Baroness was untiring in her efforts to help the poor people who had lost their all, and shared her food, and provided clothing for every one who came to her for assistance.

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTERS FOR THE BARON.

THE people of Raundorf were in a pitiable condition after the departure of the soldiers, the whole world seemed changed to them, and they felt very little interest in life. The church bell rang upon the Sabbath, but well-clothed people did not come from every direction as formerly to listen to the sermon. The few who came were ill-dressed, sad, despondent and miserable, too stupified by their losses to heed the words which fell from their pastor's lips.

The organ pealed forth its notes under the skilful fingers of the schoolmaster, but no choir of sweet voices gave praises to God as formerly, and the pastor dreaded hearing the echo of his voice in the once well-filled church.

No more, of evenings, sat contented housewives at the doors of their dwellings, knitting in hand, and chatting with their neighbors. No more did old Boaz drive the village sheep to and from the meadow, nor Leise, the goose-herder, sing merrily among her quacking brood, but instead, she searched about the village for something to appease her hunger, happy if

she found a raw potato which had been dropped unnoticed by the soldiers. The granaries were empty of food, the stalls of cattle; the palings were torn from barn-yards, fences from fields, and gates and doors from dwellings to be used as fuel, and from many houses the shingle roofs were taken for the same purpose. The people sat idly about, having no means whereby to repair the ravages of war.

The family plate and jewels of the castle had been taken to Berlin and placed in the care of some friends of the Baroness, who besought her to come and remain with them until times grew better, but she would not leave the people in their distress, but stayed that she might help them in their need.

She was grateful that her children had not suffered from the fright occasioned by the attack of the freebooters, and was happy to see them playing joyously in the covered walk and grounds of the castle, watched over by the faithful Sophie.

Lieutenant von Schönfeld, though suffering somewhat from the exposure and fatigue of his encounter with the freebooters, was forced to leave the castle, fearing that he would be taken prisoner by the enemy, and was strongly advised by his physician to go to the mineral baths, and did so; and in his place the Baroness had

prevailed upon Pastor Seeback and his wife and little grandchildren to come to the castle as company and protection for her, and all were happier by being together.

Since the country was in possession of the enemy, the Baroness had received no reliable news from her husband, nor of the condition of the main army, the report being spread and believed by many that it had been vanquished, and a great number taken prisoners.

"If I could only get a trusty messenger who would walk to the encampment and bring us a letter from my husband's own hand, I should feel like another person," said the Baroness, one day at dinner, to her guests; "but, as it is, I feel wretchedly anxious."

These words were an inspiration to Tobias, for he saw in them an opportunity to atone for his betrayal of the castle into the hands of the enemy; and it was, moreover, an opportunity to see the Baron and to tell him all that had transpired.

"Nothing can happen to me worse than the insults that I receive when I go to the village," thought he. "I will ask the Frau Baroness to let me go."

His delight was great when she gave immediate consent, and in great glee he made his arrangements to go the next morning.

All the balance of the afternoon the Baroness passed in writing to her husband, and the pastor likewise wrote a long, kind letter, knowing that every bit of news, no matter how trivial, would be appreciated. Both letters were then sewed into the lining of Tobias's coat, which was old and shabby, as was all his clothing, it being less likely to attract the attention of the enemy. The money for his traveling expenses was sewed into the hems of his trousers; and the pastor gave him advice as to his demeanor toward friends or enemies, that there might be no unpleasant adventures in his undertaking.

With a heart thrilling with pleasure over the great expedition, he left the castle, and when he reached an elevation some distance away, he turned and gazed at the stately castle of Raundorf, then at the village, the tall church-steeple, and the quiet church-yard.

"Grandfather," said he to himself, "it seems a long time since you left us, and we have seen trouble, and fear that there is more to come."

As he plodded along upon his journey he saw on every side the devastation which war had made. He had many dangers to confront, and met with several hair-breadth escapes; but he became convinced, as he proceeded, that the enemy were not the victorious conquerors that they had been supposed to be before he left

home, for they had lost as many battles as they had won, and, while their troops were upon the emperor's territory, the troops of the emperor were upon theirs. Both encampments were surrounded by fortifications, and were at any hour expecting an attack, one apparently waiting for the other.

Tobias reached the emperor's encampment just as wagons were coming in with provisions, for the contending armies had devoured everything within reach, and now edibles had to be brought from a long distance. Tobias wondered, if eighty thousand men could consume that amount in one day, what must be the quantity required by all the people in the world for the same length of time, to say nothing of provender for millions, billions, and trillions of animals; and from this thought he turned to that of admiration of the quietude in which corn grows into the perfect ear, and fruit upon the trees, and bulbs in the ground; and then, when ready for use and in people's possession, what a noise was made in preparing them for use, people not being able to grind a little corn without great hubbub and clatter.

As he went further into camp he was perplexed to know the position of the regiment in which the Baron von Raundorf was to be found. He passed hundreds of tents of the soldiers.

Poor little places they appeared to him, not much protection against rain, nor as comfortable in any way as the poorest cottage of the working people. The tents of the officers were somewhat larger, but had very few comforts. The emperor commanded his troops in person, and his tent, in the middle of the encampment, was by far the finest that Tobias had seen, reminding him of the castle in comparison with the dwellings of the peasants.

There was a great stir about the tent of the emperor, officers going in and out, and couriers flying in different directions with messages. It was before this tent that Tobias saw Baron von Raundorf standing amid a group of young officers, and in his joy the boy forgot his ragged clothing, and pressed forward to speak to the Baron.

"See here! who is this ragged urchin that has gotten into camp?" questioned one of the officers. "Stand back, boy! back! back!"

"I came to see the Herr Baron von Raundorf, and I must speak with him," said Tobias, bravely. "I have brought him letters from the Frau Baroness and our dear pastor."

"What is it?" exclaimed the Baron, stepping forward at the mention of his own name. "Who is the boy, and what does he wish?"

"O Herr Baron, don't you know me, To-

bias Troft? I came from Raundorf to bring letters, which I was to deliver into your own hand."

"O heavenly Father, I thank thee!" cried the Baron, looking upward, with tears of joy in his eyes. "My Amalie, my children—tell me, Tobias, that they are well."

"Yes, well, all well, only anxious about you. The gracious Frau Baroness, and little Otto and Lila, pray every night and morning for your safe return, and so do I. And the Herr Pastor and his wife and grandchildren are at the castle, and we all talk every day about you."

The boy could say no more, for the Baron took him in his arms, pressed him to his heart, and kissed his forehead.

"And the servants, they all stayed with their mistress during these terrible times?"

"Yes; Peter and Bertha and Rosamond are all there, Frau Rückert and her daughter Sophie."

Then Tobias took off his coat, and with the aid of the Baron's pocket-knife the stitches were cut, and the letters delivered into his hand. He kissed the letter of the Baroness, broke the seal and read eagerly to the close, then again, slowly and carefully.

"Dear Amalie," he said, as he folded the missive and put it in the breast-pocket of his

coat, "how bravely she has borne all the troubles which war has brought upon her."

Then he went to his tent, taking Tobias with him, and giving orders to his servant to set the best the place afforded before the weary boy, he sat down to read the letter of the pastor.

Tobias enjoyed the meal thoroughly, and feeling much refreshed, gave the Baron the news of the whole neighborhood, even to the welfare of old Boaz and Leise, and his listener was never weary.

Then it was decided that it were better that the boy should leave the encampment the next morning, as there was every expectation of a battle being fought.

Tobias expressed his willingness to go that evening if the Baron thought it wiser, but Herr von Raundorf told him that he wished to write letters to send back, and could not have the time during the afternoon as he had commands to fulfil for the emperor, and that it would give Tobias one night to rest before setting out upon the long walk home.

So the boy took a walk through the camp, and chatted with the soldiers, and when evening came he returned to the Baron's tent, partook of a comfortable supper, and lay down in a corner of it, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISOBEDIENCE TO ORDERS.

IT was night, so cloudy and dark that one could see nothing a few steps away, and the great encampment of the emperor lay shrouded in gloom, resembling a cemetery, the white tents barely discernible and then only by one standing very near.

There was not the faintest glimmer of a light to be seen in any part of the encampment, no camp-fire, no call of a sentinel on duty.

One would have supposed that there was no occasion for vigilance, and that every soldier was in a deep sleep; no footstep was heard, no shadow glided between the rows of tents, no voice broke the stillness.

The Baron von Raundorf had, at the usual time of retiring, laid down beside Tobias, but sleep was never farther from his eyelids. On a camp-chest beside him was a picture of his wife and children, the object upon which his last gaze rested at night and the first in the morning. The tidings brought by Tobias had made them seem very near, and he hoped and prayed that they were sleeping peace-

fully in the distant castle, beyond the reach of danger.

He laid silently revolving in his mind the shortest manner in which he could express all he wished to say in his letter to his Amalie, then rising he went to the entrance of the tent, parted the opening and looked out. All was quiet, and going to his chest he took out a taper, lighted it and set it on the ground, while he pinned securely the entrance to the tent, and hung an army-blanket over it. This done, he set the taper on the chest, got out his writing materials, and commenced the letter to his loved ones. Rapidly his pen glided over the paper, and so absorbed was he in his task that he saw nothing, heard nothing, until a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Mercy, your Majesty!" cried he, turning deadly pale, and dropping upon his knees he stretched imploring hands toward the stately form that towered above him.

"Did you hear my command this evening that not a glimmer of light was to be seen in the whole encampment?" questioned the emperor, sternly.

"Yes, your Majesty, I knew it, but I received a letter from my wife, who is suffering the bitterest anxiety for me, and I felt it my duty to try to comfort her; I am a husband and father — "

"And a soldier," interrupted the emperor, "and obedience to orders is the first law, and must go before everything else. We are striving for a glorious victory in our coming battle, hope to save the lives of thousands of our men, and perhaps bring the war speedily and happily to a close. For this purpose I gave orders that not the faintest glimmer of a light should be had in any part of the encampment, under penalty of death. I wished to mislead the enemy into making an attack, and to find us fully prepared. This plan you have frustrated by your insolent disobedience of orders."

"But, your Majesty, it is impossible that the enemy could see the glimmer of this little taper at such a distance, and your Majesty sees that a heavy blanket is over the entrance."

"Your name and rank, Herr Officer?"

"Baron Carl von Raundorf; and I am captain in the cavalry."

"Open your letter again, Herr Captain, and tell your wife that to-morrow morning at nine o'clock you will be shot for disobedience to orders."

"Mercy, mercy, your Majesty," implored the Baron, with pale lips. "I care not for myself, but for my innocent wife and children. It will add to her grief that her anxiety for me has been my death."

"Are you intending to disobey me again, Herr Officer?" questioned the emperor, coldly.

"I would gladly shed my blood for my emperor and my Fatherland, but do not let me die the death of a criminal," said the unhappy man.

"Write as I have said," commanded the emperor.

The unfortunate young officer dipped the pen in the ink, and cast another look into the stern face above him, but seeing no sign of relenting, he wrote the words which would carry anguish to the loving heart far away.

The emperor took the letter, glanced over the lines, and calling a guard to watch over the condemned officer he left the tent.

Daylight was just dawning when three of the superior officers were gathered in the tent of the General who commanded the regiment to which belonged Baron von Raundorf.

"The only word to be given him is to fall upon his face when he hears the report of the musket," was the command of the General, in a low whisper, and the secret council ended, and the other officers sought their tents.

During all this Tobias slept peacefully, and when the sun arose he awoke and dressed, chatting gaily to the Baron, who sat pale and silent in the tent, then went out to take a

further view of the encampment. He noticed that every face looked sad, but attributed it to the expectation of a near attack from the enemy. He had taken a long walk and was about returning to breakfast when he overheard words which almost caused his heart to cease to beat.

"He was writing to his wife, poor fellow," said one old soldier, with tears of sympathy in his eyes, "the last he will ever write to her or to any one."

"It is hard that such a brave officer as Captain von Raundorf should lose his life for just lighting a taper that could not be seen six feet away."

"You speak like an idiot, comrade," answered an old Hussar, "it was not the taper, but the disobedience; it is not when and how a person sins, but that he does sin. Adam and Eve ate but one apple, but they disobeyed God just the same as if they had eaten all that were on the tree, and not only they, but the whole race are punished for their disobedience. If I pass a sentinel with a cigar in my mouth I am punished for it just the same as if I enter the powder magazine with it; I have disobeyed orders and deserve to suffer for it. In time of war there are things looked upon as crimes which in time of peace would be only trifles."

These words had no meaning for Tobias, he had only heard the terrible news that the Baron was to die. He walked mechanically back to the tent and sat down in silence, numbed and stupified by the overwhelming calamity which he was to witness, for he determined to remain until after the fatal hour.

The last act of the Baron was to give Tobias the letter, and money for his return, and some keepsakes for his wife and little ones. The heart of the boy was rent with the thought that by his well-meant effort to relieve the anxiety of the Baroness he had brought this bitter woe upon her; and he prayed, oh! so earnestly, that something, even at the last minute, might occur to save the life so dear to all who knew him.

But the ninth hour drew on, and the officers of the regiment to which the Baron belonged gathered in front of his tent, conversing now and then, but always in whispers. The chaplain of the regiment was with the doomed man to receive the last wishes and the blessed assurance that there was no fear of death, all was peace as far as concerned the beyond, the young officer had given his heart to the Saviour years before and had nothing to fear.

The sound of muffled drums smote upon the

ear, and the Baron was led from his tent, followed by the weeping Tobias.

"Oh, will no one plead for him?" said he, "surely God would be more merciful than this hard-hearted king."

"See here, boy, you are speaking against your emperor," said a rough voice near him, and turning he saw a soldier who was wiping his tears away with the sleeve of his coat.

The Baron was told to kneel, that the black cloth might be tied over his eyes, and at the same moment Tobias knelt and stretched his arms imploringly toward heaven.

"Oh, dear Saviour," cried he, "come and save him from death! he is too good to die for such a little evil."

The cloth being adjusted, another officer stepped forward and pinned a bunch of wild flowers on the breast of the Baron.

"Fall forward when you hear the report of the musket," whispered he.

The Baron trembled from head to foot, and was about to speak, but the officer's hand was pressed heavily, as though by accident, upon his shoulder.

"Don't speak," whispered he, "you will attract attention."

Tobias was in an agony of grief and terror, but could not take his eyes from the terrible

scene. He heard the word "fire!" saw the Baron fall forward upon his face, and knew no more.

When he regained consciousness the servant of the Baron told him that the moment they heard the report of the musket and saw the Baron fall, two officers stepped to him and carried him quickly to a waiting ambulance, and drove rapidly away.

The story was ended, there was no more to be learned by remaining, so Tobias left the camp and set out for his long walk to the castle.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HIDDEN LETTER.

ON his way home Tobias compared his feelings with those which he had experienced when traveling the same road, but in an opposite direction. In his anxiety and distress of mind he had neglected to put the letter for the Baroness in the place where he had carried the one for the Baron, and seating himself under the shade of an apple tree, he took off his coat and placed the letter between the linings, securing it with a pin.

He had not replaced his coat when he heard footsteps, and glancing up he saw a countryman approaching.

"Have you heard the news, boy?" questioned he, eagerly, "there has been a terrible battle fought between the main armies; and the emperor's troops won the victory, and people say the war will be over. Oh, thank God! thank God!"

"If my poor Herr Baron could have lived but two days longer he would have shared in the victory, and would soon have been at the castle with his wife and children," said Tobias, bitterly.

"Maybe so, maybe so," replied the countryman, "there were thousands killed, and he might have been among them. The king's troops made an attack upon the emperor's and were repelled; three times they advanced with like result, and people say that more than twenty thousand were killed and double as many wounded. The king should have taken the advice of his councilors and not made war with the emperor, for it is a chance if he has not only lost territory but his crown; and then so many lives lost, and so much property destroyed. It is an old saying, 'in peace enjoy, in war destroy.'"

"Yes, I have seen that with my own eyes," replied Tobias, as he called to mind Raundorf in the days when no war was rife in the land.

The man having given his information, passed on to impart it to others whom he might meet, and Tobias arose, put on his coat, and proceeded on his way. He had not used the caution in avoiding the outposts of the enemy that he did in going, and had gone but a short distance when he was called upon to halt by two soldiers, who asked him who he was and where going.

Tobias thinking that all danger to the Baron was now over, made no secret of his errand, but did not mention the letter in his coat.

"Let me see what is in your pocket, boy," said one of them. "Ha, I hear paper crinkling, hand out your letter, and let us read it."

Tobias refused, and clasped his arm more firmly over the coat and its contents.

"Here is a spy!" cried one of them, "even a child carrying news to the enemy, but children can hang as well as their elders. We will take him to our Lieutenant, he will soon bring him to terms."

They tied his hands behind him and marched him into camp.

"You had better make your will, son. We will make short work of you if we find that our suspicions are correct."

Tobias by this adventure realized that life was sweet, and, notwithstanding the sorrow he had seen in the world, he was not willing to quit it; and he did not know what turn affairs might take, for he had very little confidence in the justice of war times; yet he determined not to despond, but to put a brave face upon the affair.

"When the officer reads my letter he will see that I am no spy," said he.

"Maybe so, boy, but war makes people shrewd, and they know ways to find out what is not intended for them to know. Sometimes spies carry letters which read all right and innocently; but hold them over hot coals, and

between the lines is the real news that the spy is carrying. Invisible ink is a fine thing in time of war, if the enemy has never heard of the way to make it show up."

"There is nothing between these lines; you can hold the letter over as many hot coals as you choose."

"That isn't our business; we catch the bird, and the officer picks him; our duty is done when we put a spy into his hands."

"He can write to the Frau Baroness, or to the commander of the regiment in which our Herr Baron was, and he will find out that I am telling the truth."

Both soldiers laughed at this, and looked with a glance of surprise at the boy, who had so little knowledge of the usages of war.

"Do you imagine that in these times there is as much red tape in hunting up evidence against an evil-doer as in a court? No, indeed! This morning we catch a spy; this afternoon he swings; that is war."

"Yes, it is; the terrible, horrible, wicked war, that from beginning to end has nothing but evil for the people."

"Yes, but we soldiers can't help that. We are here to kill or to be killed, and we do our best to kill in order to save ourselves from being killed."

By this time they had reached the quarters of the Lieutenant, and the soldiers explained their errand. The Lieutenant was young and full of enthusiasm, and was, therefore, anxious for ways and means to distinguish himself.

"A spy!" said he, eagerly, "and has a letter fastened securely in his coat! Come from the headquarters of the enemy! That is certainly suspicious. I will take him to the commanding General."

"Herr Lieutenant, do you really believe me to be a spy? You know me; you also saw the Frau Baroness, and you know that I am telling the truth when I say that this letter is the last one that her husband, the Herr Baron, will ever write, for he is dead."

"But, boy," said the bewildered Lieutenant, "how can I know you or the Frau Baroness?"

"Do not you remember, Herr Lieutenant, passing through Raundorf with many other prisoners, and Gustav took your crutch from you and threw it away, and I picked it up and gave it to you? And don't you remember that I took you into the castle yard, and that the gracious Frau Baroness gave me leave to take out for the poor prisoners all the provisions that were in the castle?"

"Yes, yes, I do indeed remember. And are

you the boy that did that, and that gave many of us water to drink out of a pitcher?"

"Yes, I am the boy. And now you can read the letter, and can hold it over hot coals; and if there is anything between the lines, you can hang me for a spy. The poor Herr Baron only thought of his wife and children when he was writing that."

The officer took the letter and read it through, his face growing sadder and sadder, and when he read the last lines his face turned a shade paler, and tears filled his eyes.

"Poor fellow!" said he. "Was he really shot? Did the emperor never countermand the order?"

"No. I saw him fall. He was shot down like a dog, for burning a little taper that the men said you could not see a few yards from the tent; but they said that it was just."

"Yes, for he disobeyed orders; that is a terrible offence in time of war."

"Yes; but I cannot see what war is for, except to bring misery into the world."

"Yes, boy, war is a bad thing, but it appears that everybody fights, civilized or uncivilized; even animals have their wars."

"But they have no religion, no understanding. Our pastor says that, if we were more like Christ, there would be no war. Christ preached

against it, but we don't obey his word as soldiers do their officers."

"I remember that good pastor of Raundorf. He plead with the citizens not to molest us. I remember, too, the Frau Baroness and her goodness to us. I will go to our commander, and tell him that you are no spy, but a good, kind boy, who helped us when we were in need of help. While I am gone with the letter you must have something to eat. Here, Appolonius, bring my guest that roast chicken, and make him a cup of good coffee."

"What a change!" thought Tobias, as he sat down to a generous meal. "Instead of being hung as a spy, I am treated to the best that he has, and that best is very good to anybody, and especially to a hungry boy. The little kindness that I showed him has been returned a hundredfold, for it may be that it has saved my life. But I cannot see that the dear Herr Baron and Frau Baroness are being rewarded for their goodness. They seem to have had much trouble, and now his life is lost for a trifle. There are some things that I cannot understand. I must ask the Herr Pastor about this when I see him."

He had scarcely finished his meal when the Lieutenant returned.

"It is all right," said he, "and the com-

mander advises you not to secrete the letter, but to carry it loosely in your pocket, and thus avoid further detention, and perhaps danger. Give my kindest regards to the gracious Baroness, and tell her that none of the prisoners will ever forget her goodness to them."

"I wish that you had been emperor," said Tobias, earnestly, "and I am sure that our dear Herr Baron would now be alive."

He bade good-bye to the lieutenant, and, much refreshed by the rest that he had enjoyed and the good meal that he had eaten, set out again upon his walk.

CHAPTER XX.

GREAT CHANGES.

TOBIAS traveled all that day and the next, and toward the middle of the afternoon the turrets of the castle came in view, then the village of Raundorf, and the church steeple, then the window in the belfry-tower, from which he and his grandfather had so often looked.

He missed the sound of the lowing of cows, the bleating of sheep and goats, the cackling of geese, the joyous singing of shepherd boys and maidens, and the shouts of merry children.

"All is sad and changed about here," thought he, "nothing seems the same since the war; but what is the change to the Frau Baroness in comparison to this new trouble which I am taking to her?"

As he opened the gate of the court-yard he was amazed at the sight which met his view. Groups of ragged men, women, and children were receiving bread and cheese, and meat, their haggard faces brightening with joy that they were to have at least one full meal.

"The kind Frau Baroness!" thought Tobias, "she will give her last loaf to feed the poor. I do not think I can give her the letter, I will give it to the Herr Pastor, he will know better than I what to say."

This decision was a great relief to the boy, and he was on the point of going around to the covered walk and escape the gaze of the Baroness by entering the castle by way of the wing, when he met with another great surprise. It was no less than to see Albert Scheinert, the former steward's son, dressed in a fine suit, and coming down the steps of the castle with a very high head indeed. While Tobias was pondering over this he saw something that surprised him yet more, and that was Scheinert himself, equally well dressed, and apparently in high good humor with the whole world, himself included.

Tobias was so astonished that he could only look from one to the other in dumb surprise, which reached its climax when the main entrance door of the castle opened and out walked his old enemy, Bruno von Seerhausen. He was dressed in a handsome uniform, which did not appear to belong to the army or navy, but to some one of the government offices.

Off went ragged hats and caps at the sight of him, and the air was rent with shouts of

"Hurrah for our brave Herr von Seerhausen! Hurrah! three times three! Hurrah!"

"Our Herr von Seerhausen!" said Tobias, slowly to himself, "am I dreaming, or am I really at Raundorf Castle? Can it be possible that the Frau Baroness has heard of the Herr Baron's death, and married von Seerhausen? I always thought that widows put on mourning for their husbands, and did not marry again for a long time, if at all. But that was in time of peace; no one knows what to expect in time of war. People are not like themselves, and anything might happen."

But poor as was the opinion of war in the mind of Tobias, he was ashamed of himself for his foolish thought in regard to Frau von Raundorf.

"Never!" said he to himself, "she never would forget the Herr Baron, whom she so loved, as to ever marry Herr von Seerhausen who hated her children. But I cannot see what it all means; if he is master here, it is no place for me, and I must not let him nor Albert see me if I can help it."

Tobias ran his eyes over the motley crowd to single out one of whom he could inquire what it meant, and finally saw Frau Metzger, who had roasted the goose for his grandfather the day that the Baron and Baroness had visited them.

She was engaged in putting her share of bread and meat in her apron, and Tobias waited until she moved toward the gate, then he slipped outside and waited for her.

"Frau Metzger," said he, "tell me what it all means. Has the Frau Baroness sold the castle to Herr von Seerhausen? Where is she and the little Otto and Lila?"

"Oh, are you Tobias? You are ragged, but I thought it was somebody I ought to know. If you will walk along with me I will tell you, but I can't stop, for my children are hungry."

Tobias walked with her and plied her with questions.

"Yesterday," said she, "the Herr von Seerhausen rode into the village with several strange men in the emperor's uniform, and they got our magistrate and judge to tell the people of the village, that, by order of the emperor, the Castle of Raundorf and all the estate belonging to it was to be the property of von Seerhausen, according to the will of the old Baron. If the Raundorf people espoused the cause of Herr von Seerhausen, and were obedient to his wishes, prosperity would come to them as quickly as possible. You may be sure we welcomed him gladly on such terms, and in a quarter of an hour he was master of the castle, and the Frau Baroness was turned out

with nothing but the clothes she and her children had on at the time."

"And where is she now, and Otto and Lila?"

"At the Herr Pastor's for a time; she would have gone to Berlin, where she has relatives, but the small-pox has broken out there, and she was afraid to expose the little ones to it."

She had scarcely finished speaking when Tobias was off to the parsonage. "If I can only see the Herr Pastor first," thought he, "but it would just be the luck of war to run right in the way of the Frau Baroness."

It turned out better than he had hoped; the pastor was walking in his garden, and Tobias crept through the hedge, and telling him of the letter and the need of secrecy, accompanied him to an old arbor, hidden by trees from view of the parsonage, and put the letter in his hand.

"Father in Heaven, how mysterious are thy ways!" cried the pastor, turning deadly pale, as he read the last lines. "Oh, the poor wife; the poor children! She, a widow, cast out penniless from her home; her brave and noble husband shot, not on the field of battle, but for disobedience to orders. Oh, it is frightful!"

"Everything is frightful in war," commented Tobias, "nothing is like what it is in time of peace."

The pastor said nothing, his whole mind was set upon the best plan to pursue in regard to imparting the news to the Baroness. He put his hands behind him and walked slowly up and down the path, stopping now and then and looking absently about him, then resuming his walk; while Tobias sat and wept.

"This bitter cup, too, must be drained to the dregs," thought Herr Seeback; "God give me the right words, and to the poor widow his tenderest comfort."

He turned and went into the house, and Tobias waited in the arbor a moment, then crept to the porch.

Herr Seeback took the large Bible from the table, and, speaking to his wife and the Frau Baroness, said he wished to read them a chapter which he had been thinking of while walking in the garden. "It is the story of Christ upon the cross," said he, "and this afternoon the scene upon Calvary has come vividly to my mind."

He read the chapter through, then sat a moment in thought. "I cannot but think of that poor mother whose beloved Son is hanging upon the cross," said he. "She could almost feel the cruel thorns upon her forehead, the nails in her hands and feet, and her loving heart bled for his sufferings; her relief must

have been great when he cried, 'It is finished!' You, gracious lady, have no doubt often grieved over the danger to which your husband is exposed as a soldier, and would rather his death should be speedy, than the long and painful one of our Saviour upon the cross."

"Oh, I could not choose between the dreadful alternatives; I do not allow myself to think of his death, only of the happy close of the war and his home-coming. Thank God we have had no bad news! The losing of our property is nothing, if he but comes home safely."

"There has been a terrible battle fought within the last few days between the main armies, and thousands on both sides are killed. The regiment in which your husband belonged was particularly unfortunate, and—"

"He is dead! my husband!" cried the Baroness, sinking back almost fainting in her chair, "that is why you read that chapter, you were preparing me for the terrible news."

"Yes, it is true, but call to mind the mother of our dear Lord. In a few days she had the joy of seeing him again; and comfort yourself with the thought that when your short pilgrimage is finished you will be with him never to part."

"Are you sure that what you tell me is true?"

questioned she, faintly, "sometimes the reports are not correct."

"Yes, this is true, I heard it from Tobias, who has returned. He saw the Herr Baron, and got this letter from him. He is outside, I will call him." He did so, and Tobias came in.

"A letter for me?" said the Baroness, taking it in her hand, "the last I will ever get from him," and tears came to her relief.

"Read it, gracious lady," said the pastor, after a time, "read it while we are with you."

The Baroness read it aloud to her pale and silent listeners.

"My beloved wife, my Amalie! In spirit I am with you and our children, while my body is in camp, surrounded by preparations for an expected attack of the enemy. For your sake I often wish I had gotten my discharge from the army, but for my country's sake I desisted. I consider it my duty to stand by our Fatherland and our emperor in time of need. I have rejoiced over the letters brought by our good Tobias, and have much to be thankful for that you are all well; and I look forward with joy to the time when I shall see you again. God has indeed been good in preserving me from danger; no bullet, no sword, — O Amalie—beloved wife—the emperor is here—I have—disobeyed orders—and to-morrow at nine—I

must—die. We will meet in heaven. Farewell—kiss the little ones—for me.

"YOUR CARL."

"What orders could he have disobeyed?" questioned the Baroness, in a faint voice.

"Tobias will tell you, he saw and heard all; tell her, Tobias."

"The good Herr Baron but burned a poor, weak little taper in his tent, and the emperor had commanded that there should be no light in the camp. The soldiers said it could not be seen a few yards away, but they said it was just."

"Why did he have a light?"

"He wished to write that letter to you, he had no time through the day."

The letter dropped from the hand of the Baroness and she swooned away.

With many tears Frau Seeback used the simple restoratives within her reach, and after a time the poor woman came back to a knowledge of her anguish.

"Oh, is there on this broad earth a creature so miserable as I," said she, faintly, "I sought to give him comfort by writing to him that we were all well, and his love for me made him disobey the king. Not an honorable death upon the battle-field, but he, an officer, shot for disobedience to orders. Oh, that was a bitter drop in his cup, and all through me."

"You must take the Christian's comfort," said the pastor, "your husband was a true Christian and was not afraid to die. You have a duty to perform in training your dear children for heaven; you will find comfort in your God and Saviour. For more than eighteen hundred years human beings have looked to him and have never been turned away comfortless. To one and all he says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,' and you are one of his beloved children."

CHAPTER XXI.

ALBERT SCHEINERT'S SPEECH.

DURING the next year Tobias found it to be an astonishing fact that people could endure much suffering, and yet live. He had noticed it in the case of the Baroness, and, as time passed on, in that of the people of Raundorf.

Every now and again he would say to himself, "Well, they cannot hold out another day; they will certainly die of grief and despair;" but they did live, week after week, and month after month, suffering all the time, but enduring.

The war, which his chance acquaintance had predicted would soon be over, was raging as violently as ever, and the people had to endure the quartering of soldiers, the terrible battles, the loss of their cattle, the burning of their dwellings—in truth, every privation—as best they could, just as they had done for a year or more.

The kindness which the Baron and Baroness had always shown to Pastor Seeback and his family was now, in time of need, returned many fold. The Baroness and her children were made cordially welcome in the pastor's home,

and she was reminded by him and his family that through her husband's kindness in paying promptly the legacy left by the old Baron they were abundantly able to provide for her and her children.

As the guardian of Tobias, the pastor gave him an excellent home, and the boy urged him to use the share of the legacy which had descended from his grandfather to him; but the pastor said that there was no need, and that it must remain on interest as a capital for Tobias when he came of age; so he made himself useful at the parsonage, and Herr Seeback and his wife often wondered how they had managed without him.

There were great changes in the castle, none being in it who had formed part of the household of Baron von Raundorf. Frau Rückert and Sophie had gone back to their home; the servants had been set adrift by the new owner, and their places had been filled by those of his own choosing. Herr von Seerhausen had laid aside his sheep's clothing, and showed himself the wolf that he really was, for he oppressed his tenants and persecuted them for the rent of their cottages, turning them out if they were unable to pay; and no pleadings of sickness or poverty availed with him.

He set men to work to cut down the splen-

did beech forest, which had been the pride of the Baron's heart, and Tobias could have wept when he heard the mighty monarchs fall. He, however, took comfort in the thoughtfulness of the wood-cutters, for they never felled a tree until every limb and branch of the one preceding it had been neatly cleared away, the wood sold, and the branches burned. This beech forest was loved by Tobias; in it he had hunted for hares and squirrels, had gathered nuts and wild flowers, and had played the trumpet to his heart's content.

The Baroness knew very little of what was going on in the castle. She seldom stepped outside the parsonage except to go to church, and von Seerhausen hated the pastor for having broken up his ghost affair with Tobias, so he never came near the parsonage.

As provisions could not be obtained with any certainty in Raundorf, it was one of the duties of Tobias to walk to Berlin for them when needed, and in his walks to and fro he frequently saw hungry men prowling about the woods and gazing after him when he passed, but they never accosted him.

One autumn afternoon he set out from Berlin, and in a sack across his shoulders he had bread, meat, butter, cheese, sausage and groceries. A tall, thin, weak-looking man stepped from be-

hind a tree in the first woods through which he passed, and seemed about to address him, but instead, stepped back and Tobias passed on. Soon he heard footsteps, and looking back saw he was followed. This was not pleasant to Tobias, and he decided upon greater haste, for he did not wish night to come upon him while so far from Raundorf. It was not without uneasiness that he reached a strip of very thick forest, and hearing that the footsteps had increased in speed, he had no doubt that the object of his pursuer was theft. He called to mind the huge trunk of a tree which had a large hollow in it several feet from the ground, and he stepped behind some bushes which concealed it, just as the man reached him, and threw the sack within it.

"Why did you hide from me?" questioned he, in a harsh tone.

"Because I wished you to pass on; I would rather follow than be followed."

"Why so? Do you think I meant to harm you?"

"It looked like it, or what was your object in following me?"

"I am not after you, but the things you have in your sack; where is it?"

"I won't tell you; the things are not mine, and you shall not have them."

"But I must have them; see, boy, I am nearly starved, and my children are crying for bread; I will give you this pistol for what you have, and he took a large old-time one from his breast-pocket."

"I have no right to sell the things; no more right than I have to give them away."

"You have no occasion to do either; tell me where they are, and I will help myself to them."

"I will not; I would be as bad as a thief to do that, but I will make a bargain with you. The people to whom they belong would never be willing to refuse them to any one who is hungry. If you will promise to take only part you shall have it, will you promise?"

"No, I want all, a part would be as nothing to us who have fasted so long. It is not often I get a chance to get food, and will not let it go by. Yes, I know where they are," continued he, looking about him, "you threw them down the trunk of this hollow tree."

"Did you see me do it?"

"No, but that is the only place you could hide them, get them for me, boy, or it will be the worse for you," and he looked significantly at his pistol.

"But I can't reach them," said Tobias, going to the tree, "don't you see my arm is too short? The old dead oak is hollow to the root."

"Let me try," said the man, pushing him aside, and stepping upon a root of the trunk he reached in; and Tobias, seeing his opportunity, seized his feet and landed him head-foremost into the trunk.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the poor creature, "help me or I die!"

"What can I do?" exclaimed the frightened Tobias, "I could not have strength to pull you out if I tried all night."

"No, but hand me in a stick; I can rest my hand upon it and recover my balance."

In all the haste possible Tobias got the stick, and after much struggling the man was out, staggering from exhaustion.

"Never do that again, boy," said he, throwing himself at the foot of the tree to recover himself. "Be he friend or foe, never, never do that. The agony would be terrible to even a strong man, and to one like me, sick from hunger, and faint from long walks in search of work, it would have been death in a very little while."

Oh, forgive me; forgive me!" said Tobias, with tears running down his cheeks, "the thought came to me the instant I saw you reach into the hollow, and I did not take a moment to think."

"Satan put it into your head, just as he did

in mine to hurt you if you did not give me the sack of food."

"Oh, you shall have it, poor man, even if I have to walk all the way to Berlin for more," and he started up to get it.

"But you cannot reach it, it was as much as I could do to touch it with the tips of my fingers."

"I can jump in," cried Tobias, "and the moment I bring it out you shall have something to eat."

It was but a moment's work for the boy to drop into the trunk, and throwing the sack out, he quickly followed. He opened it, and breaking off a piece of the bread spread it with butter with his pocket-knife and gave it, with a large piece of cheese, to the half-famished man, who devoured it greedily. Slice after slice followed, and then he professed his hunger satisfied.

"I will not take but half the things," said he, "I will eat no more to-night, and my wife and little ones shall have all you give me. I was intending to take it from you by the law of might, as the soldiers took all of ours from us, but one satisfying meal has made me more like myself. O boy, a hungry man is a desperate man, and the war has left many such in its train."

With his pocket-knife Tobias divided the

meat, cheese, butter and sausage, and gave half to the man, also part of the groceries and bread; and fortunately found the sack long enough to bear dividing, which, with one end tied, held all the stranger's share.

"May God bless you, boy," said he, "you have saved me, perhaps, from doing harm to you or some one, for to save my children from starving I should have taken the sack and all it contained. Thank you, oh, a thousand times, and may you never know the want that has come to us!"

"Would you have hurt me with that pistol if I had refused to give you any of the things."

"That old pistol won't shoot; it is broken, and, besides, I have no bullets."

"What use have you for it?" asked Tobias.

"I took it to Berlin and tried to sell it, but nobody would buy. I will give it to you for the things you have given me, it is all I have to give."

"What is your name?" inquired Tobias.

"It is Werner; I am a weaver, and had a good loom, and made a comfortable living for my wife and children, but the war came on, and the soldiers took all our sheep and our cow, and took the roof off my house for fuel, and when I got angry and said something to

them, they broke my loom, and threatened to burn our house over our heads."

"Where do you live?"

"We did live near Berlin, but just before the war broke out we moved to a house about a mile from Raundorf, where we could keep a cow and poultry, and were getting along well, until we got all broken up by the war."

"Then your way and mine is in the same direction," said Tobias, "so we can walk along together," and he picked up his sack, and gave the other to Werner.

"Yes, I feel much more able to walk now, and must go as fast as I can, for my little ones need this good bread."

They walked briskly until they came to where their roads diverged, and then Werner thanked Tobias again.

"If you are in such need again, come to the parsonage," said Tobias, "the good pastor or the Frau Baroness will help you all they can, I know."

"Won't you take the pistol?" inquired Werner.

Feeling loth to embarrass him by refusing the simple gift, Tobias took it, with the understanding that if Werner ever wished it back he would come to the parsonage and get it. And so with good wishes from both they parted, and

Tobias proceeded on his way alone, the old pistol thrust in the breast of his coat.

He had entered the strip of beech woods between the castle and Raundorf when he met with another adventure in the shape of an interview with Albert Scheinert.

"Well," said he, "you have come at last, I had almost concluded that you were not coming back to-night. I have been watching for some time for a chance to tell you my opinion of you, and when I saw you on your way to Berlin this morning I thought I would be on the lookout for you this evening."

"Very well; here I am, what is it you wish to say?" inquired Tobias.

I put myself to the trouble to come here to tell you that had it not been for your meddling, the Baron von Raundorf would never have heard of a will in his favor, and my father would not have lost his place, and I would not have been sent away for playing ghost. In short, you are the root of all evil, and Bresler and I are intending to give you the best flogging you ever had in your life. Ho! Bresler, we have got him, and will thrash him until there will not be a piece of skin on his back as large as my hand."

"Is that your plan?" said Tobias, drawing the old pistol from his breast, "which of you

wishes to leave the world first, or do you prefer going together?"

It was difficult to say which boy got out of reach first; they tumbled over each other in their haste to get away from Tobias, fell into the swamp and muddied their clothes, and scratched their faces with briars, while Tobias laughed long and loud, and thanked the old pistol, that could not have been prevailed upon to shoot, even under the rejuvenating of a skilful gunsmith.

When he reached the parsonage the Baroness and Herr Seeback and his wife gave him credit for his kindness in giving the poor weaver a share of the provisions; and as he did not come to the parsonage the two ladies sent Tobias with a sack full of eatables to the poor family, who welcomed it with tears of joy.

CHAPTER XXII.

A HAPPY REUNION.

THE second year of the war had nearly ended, and the soldiers had settled in winter quarters to await a call to commence again their work of death. They were not quartered at Raundorf, and for that the people rejoiced; but the evils of war were upon them in full force, and among them the small-pox, many being afflicted by the terrible pest.

Herr von Seerhausen was so alarmed by the reports of the epidemic that he would not leave the castle even for a short walk, nor would he allow any communication with the outside world; while the Baroness, Herr Seeback and his wife were angels of mercy to the poor villagers, going freely among the sick, giving comfort, help, and sympathy to all who stood in need of assistance.

But for all Herr von Seerhausen's vigilance, he took the disease, and, after a few days, was no longer of earth. He had not been just to his fellow-men, had oppressed the needy, and had done very little good in the world; therefore his departure was not felt to be a loss; yet

at the parsonage there were sorrowing hearts for the unfortunate, lonely man, who had never enjoyed the riches to which he was not entitled, and who had died without making restitution. They could only indulge a hope that he had repented and had looked to a Saviour for help in his last days upon earth.

The castle was now again in the possession of the Baroness and her children, and it was decided that she should return to it and gather her tenants about her and the old servants, so soon as the apartments lately occupied by Herr von Seerhausen had been properly cleansed and fumigated, that all danger of small-pox might, so far as lay in their power, be averted. In the meantime they remained welcome guests at the parsonage.

There was a great difference in the bed occupied by Tobias at the castle and that at the parsonage, but he slept as sweetly upon his straw mattress as when, a child, he shared it with his grandfather. Like many others in those troublous times, he seldom disrobed at night, for they knew not at what hour they might be called from their beds to defend themselves against armed men.

One morning, just as day was breaking, Tobias was awakened from a sound sleep by hearing many voices in the yard under his window,

among them that of Frau Seeback, and she was weeping. Tobias sprang from his bed and ran out. He found a company of the enemy's soldiers, and in the midst of them was Pastor Seeback, whom they were dragging away to act as guide for them in pointing out families who would be apt to have money, in order to make them tell where it was hidden. In vain Tobias plead that he knew all the people in the neighborhood as well as did the pastor, and that he would do what they required of him. They silenced him by threatening to kill Herr Seeback if he refused to go.

"Be tranquil, dear wife," said the pastor; "I am under God's care, and he will protect me. He will never desert us." The soldiers prevented any further speech by dragging him away, Tobias following.

He found the village thronged with soldiers, and more coming. Camp-fires were burning, made from the roofs of dwellings, before which soldiers were resting, and warming their wet feet. In the distance was heard the thunder of cannon, making the earth tremble, and from many of the dwellings came the sounds of screaming children, waked from happy slumber by the terrible din, and of frightened men and women, in danger of their lives unless they gave up all their possessions to the brutal invaders.

It was one of the terrible scenes of war times with which all had become familiar. More than once Tobias was in danger of his life from the hoofs of the cavalry horses, or from soldiers who struck at him with their weapons, when he ran against them. The confusion increased as the day advanced, and the sound of cannonading grew nearer. The battle was near at hand, the village full of wounded soldiers, and Tobias grew almost faint at the sight of flowing blood; men's blood, brother's blood, which cried to heaven as did that of Abel, when slain by his brother Cain.

The village was set on fire, and Tobias ran to the parsonage to see if it was spared, but found it in flames, and the women and children gathered in the garden, where they were a few minutes after joined by Herr Seeback.

"We cannot grieve for our property, now that you and Tobias are spared," said Frau Seeback, smiling through her tears, "we feared you would be killed."

"I feel much exhausted from my long and hurried walk," replied he, "but my chief anxiety was for you, when I saw them setting the buildings on fire."

"Where can we go to be safe?" questioned his wife, anxiously.

"I know of no place likely to be secure,

unless it be the vault under the church, we will go there, and do what we can on the way to escape the bullets that are flying in every direction."

They joined hands and ran through the garden-way to the back entrance to the church, the windows and tower of which were filled with the emperor's soldiers who were firing down upon the enemy. They reached it in safety, and with difficulty the pastor and Tobias raised the trap-door of the vault, the hinges of which had grown rusty.

"Oh, woe is me!" said Herr Seeback, "I had forgotten that it was so deep, we cannot get down without a ladder."

"I will get it from the gardener," said Tobias, eagerly.

"Oh, you noble boy," said the Baroness, tearfully, "may God protect you in your dangerous walk."

"It is well we have to wait a while," remarked the pastor, cheerfully, "the air in the vault is impure, and the trap-door being open will allow it to escape by the time Tobias returns."

But the poor children were in such a state of nervous terror that his words gave but little comfort, and they were only quieted by the return of Tobias with the ladder.

It was placed down the opening and the

pastor descended, then one after another of the frightened band, except Tobias, who closed the trap-door, and kept guard on the outside.

The firing continued, and overhead the pastor had heard a shot followed by a shriek of mortal pain, and his face blanched at a thought which came to his mind, but which he carefully kept from the others. What if it were Tobias who had been killed, who would open the trap-door to let them out? For a moment he was so shaken by the dread that he almost lost consciousness, but his firm trust in God returned, he had faith that they would not be left to perish in that way, and waited in patience that endured to the end.

At length the firing grew less frequent, then subsided. There was no sound of voices, nor of the hoofs of horses; and, oh, joy! they heard the footsteps of Tobias, the trap-door was unhasped, was lifted, and they were free. One by one they ascended, and Tobias drew up the ladder and locked the door, then all dropped on their knees, and the pastor thanked God for all his goodness to them. True, their dwelling was in ashes and they were homeless, but the castle stood ready for their reception, and thither they all went, the Baroness rejoicing that she could give them a home under her roof. A full suite of apartments was furnished

them, and Tobias was back in his old quarters in the wing.

For some months the war raged, but at length peace—sweet peace—spread its brooding wings over the unhappy country. People who had despaired were beginning to hold up their heads, and take interest in life, when, one evening as the Baroness and her children and Pastor Seeback and his family were conversing around the parlor fire, old Peter came, his aged face wreathed in smiles, to announce a visitor.

"A stranger, Peter?" questioned the Baroness.

"Yes, gracious lady, a stranger and yet a friend," said the old man, beaming with joy, "and Herr Tobias was the first to know and welcome him."

"Bring the visitor here, Peter; my friends are friends of our good Pastor and Pastorin."

"But he wishes to see you alone, gracious lady; he is in the ante-room, and will wait for you there."

The Baroness arose, and followed; and the waiting listeners heard a cry of surprise and joy, and the words, "my precious wife!" "my long-lost husband!"

For it was indeed the Baron, come back—as it appeared to them—from the dead.

Oh! the joy of that meeting! Tobias was

one of the happiest of the happy after he was convinced that the person whom he had seen fall was yet alive. They all returned to the parlor, and the Baron told the story of his deliverance.

"It was owing to the pleadings of my brother-officers that the General let them plan to save my life. I do not know, and perhaps never will know, whether the emperor was aware of it or not; nor can I say whether I was conscious of their design when the officer who pinned the flowers on my breast whispered to me to fall forward when I heard the report of the musket. All that I know is, that as a soldier I was not afraid to shed my blood upon the field of battle; but it is a very different thing to kneel, and, with bandaged eyes, have a comrade aim at one's breast for disobedience of orders. I believe that I was unconscious, for I remember nothing of falling, or of being carried away, my first knowledge being that I was on the way to the fort, where I was to remain a prisoner under an assumed name until the close of the war."

If there was anything, next to the declaration of peace, that could make the people of Raundorf rejoice, it was that the Baron Carl von Raundorf was again among them as master of the castle; and he set to work immediately to

help them regain their lost footing, for the only noticeable result from the long strife was the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of millions of property.

A new parsonage was built, and the pastor and his family went to it, and Tobias had two beloved homes where he was looked upon as a son of the house.

After a time the lowing of cattle, and the bleating of sheep and goats, was heard in the meadows; the village was rebuilt; and well-dressed people came from far and near to the house of God.

Tobias had the place of organist, and sweet-voiced singers gave praise to their Father in heaven, who had given their beloved country the great blessing of peace.

Pastor Seeback never closed a prayer without including the petition, "Oh, deliver us from the greatest evil which can befall a nation or a people; deliver us, if it be thy will, from the evil of war."

705

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00020686960